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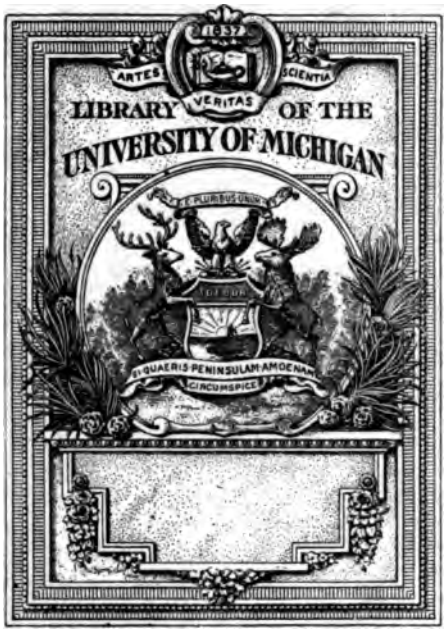
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Scratched on Copper from Life in 1823 by his friend Brook Pulham.

Yours Truly Charles Lamb

MEDITATIONS

OF AN

AUTOGRAPH COLLECTOR

by

ADRIAN H. JOLINE

"*The undevout autograph collector is mad*"
– Young, N. T. ix.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS
PUBLISHERS 1902

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Published May, 1902.

often objectionable. One might as well censure the innocent collector of coins because some over-enthusiastic individual occasionally resorts to the strenuous expedient of assault and battery, or highway robbery, in order to increase his store. Really, I have no apologies to make for my amiable tribe. When such men as Dr. Emmet, Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, and Mr. John D. Crimmins collect autographs, we humble persons may not be ashamed to follow in their footsteps—*haud passibus aequis.*

In the *Connoisseur* of October, 1901, Henry Thomas Scott writes concerning "Rational Autograph Collecting," and expresses the opinion that interest in the subject and the number of collectors "steadily increase." I hope that it is true, and, if it be true, there may be some who may find something to appeal to them in these notes and jottings, made in the leisure intervals of a professional life.

ADRIAN H. JOLINE.

NEW YORK, 1902.

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MEDITATIONS OF AN AUTOGRAPH COLLECTOR

MEDITATIONS OF AN AUTOGRAPH COLLECTOR

I

IT is a pleasant thing to sit here, this rainy afternoon, with the books and the "collection" close at hand. I have certainly been arranging that collection for ten years, and it is not arranged yet. If these things continue to increase in numbers I shall have to resort to the methods of that old opium-swiller, De Quincey—lock the door, abandon the accumulations, and seek a new lodging where I may begin all over again. I believe there is a tribe of Indians somewhere in Alaska who have the pleasing custom of burning their wigwams when they find that their goods and chattels are becoming oppressively overcrowded, and starting life afresh, unburdened by personal property. I think I will go to Alaska and collect totem-poles. A distinguished Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, now deceased, used to collect almanacs, even those of Ayer and Josh

Billings. Why he did it I cannot imagine, for he never made a joke in his life; he was as dry as the pages of the *Annals of Congress* or of my own *Dictionary of American Political Biography*. But one must collect something, even postage-stamps and book-plates. Who said that man is an animal which collects? It must have been Andrew Lang, for he says most things nowadays.

Doubtless the "profane vulgar" consider me, and all other individuals of my autograph-hunting species, as members of the common horde of semi-lunatics who gather birds' eggs, butterflies, hotel-paper, tea-cups, and Japanese sword-guards. They think that I carry about with me a gilt-bound volume and ask luckless magnates to write their names in it. I have always had a notion that the books which the Sibyl brought to Tarquinius Priscus were what are known as "autograph books," such as are thrust in these days under the noses of senators and generals. They suppose that I send letters to statesmen and authors, requesting the favor, etc., etc., and enclosing stamp for reply. When they wish to be particularly kind, they tear the signature from some letter or document of an eminent person and present it to me. To use a familiar, contemporaneous locution, it jars me to reflect that, in the minds of the multitude,

the school-girl with her scrap-book and the fiend with his awful album are all of a piece with *me!* It is exasperating, but one must exercise patience and self-control even when friends give sympathizing looks, and smile as who should say, "It is an amiable folly."

There is, however, one evil thing about the otherwise harmless habit of autograph collecting. It fosters envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. When I glance over the other man's collection and find that he has so much better specimens than mine, and even several which I have sought for in vain through those interminable Philadelphia catalogues and the long lists of Burns and the Benjamins and the other busy B's of the trade, I proceed to break that commandment recently appended to the decalogue, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's autographs." Yet when I go home and think over it, I reflect that perhaps I may excite that neighbor's ire if I choose; but I will be magnanimous and gloat secretly over my possessions.

How very inconsiderate some of our great people have been in the matter of epistolary composition! If Thomas Lynch, Jr., and Button Gwinnett, and John Morton had only un-

derstood the feelings of a collector, they would surely have favored their friends more frequently with an A. L. S.,[1] or even an A. N. S.[2] When they were signing the Declaration on that warm July afternoon, and committing themselves to the famous fallacy that "all men are created equal," they might have foreseen the day when every American collector would begin his colligending career by gathering "Signers."

On reflection, I recall the fact that, historically, they did not sign in July, but dribbled along through the summer and autumn of 1776, and even later, so that some signed who were not entitled to sign and others failed to sign who ought to have signed; but that is a detail. We must all cling loyally to the belief that they flocked about that table, one pleasant summer day, as they are represented by the accurate and artistic Trumbull, their shins very much in evidence, and John Hancock, clad in black, and several times bigger than any of his fellow-congressmen, sitting cross-legged, with a melancholy expression of countenance, in the chair of state. I give the most implicit credence to that picture, as I do to all those wonderful representations of General George Washington which make the life of the extra-illustrator a

[1] Autograph letter signed. [2] Autograph note signed.

burden. All that the younger Lynch did after his single effort in the signing way was to write one letter for Dr. Emmet, and to scribble his name on the fly-leaves of divers books. As for Gwinnett, I have always thought that old Lachlan McIntosh, whose autograph is dear at two dollars, did perfectly right to kill him.

Verily, the paths of the collector of Revolutionary Americana are far from being paths of peace. I remember well that in the callow days of youth I was mightily beset by the desire to acquire as my own the sign-manual of one Simon Boerum, who enjoyed the distinction of being such an obscure Continental congressman that he became valuable by reason of his unimportance. There is an eminence of smallness as well as of greatness, and Tom Thumb attained fame while many contemporary persons of much greater stature disappeared from life unhonored and unsung. Think of the glory of being absolutely the most insignificant human being on earth! Simon—perhaps we may call him Simple Simon—was just that; and when I rejoiced in owning an innocuous deed of conveyance whereon Simon had written and subscribed his harmless certificate of record, far back in 1769, when he was the clerk of our County of Kings, I thought I was the happy

possessor of a gem of great price; for the price was great, as a certain well-known Nassau Street expert can testify. But not many years later, that genial Democratic statesman of the tribe of Dan, who successfully combines politics and the pursuit of autographs, raked Long Island with a fine comb, and now every child who gathers pebbles on the beach may have his Simon Boerum if he cares for such a thing.

A plague, I say, on those mousers who go about finding new and hitherto unsuspected Continental congressmen. Just when I think that I have finished my set, some new man turns up who never served, of course, and never showed his classic countenance in Philadelphia; but somebody once said that he might possibly be chosen to represent his State, and that is enough. His name goes thundering down the ages and there is a blank in my catalogue, to be filled only after long, tedious, and prayerful waiting. This sort of person generally turns up as a D. S.[1] He could not write a letter, and if he did the man who received it burned it promptly. He usually hails from North Carolina or New Jersey. My study of history tells me that North Carolina devoted most of her energies during the Revolution to choosing

[1] Document signed.

congressmen who were unwilling to write. I am seriously contemplating besieging Congress for legislation to prevent further additions to the roll.

George Birkbeck Hill has given us a charming book in his *Talks about Autographs.* It might have been fascinating if the author had a little keener sense of humor. His bent is serious, and he is not happy when indulging in playful persiflage. Still, no lover of the business should be without a copy. When men in Wall Street have been particularly disagreeable all day, it is a delight to stretch one's self in an easy-chair, with feet to the hospitable gas-log which does duty in the city for the grand old fireplace of our country home, and ramble through the pages of genial literary and autographic gossip. Yet Hill is not, after all, a genuine master in the field. He has not taken those pains which make the genius. Think of this!

On page 60 he quotes what he calls a "strange endorsement" upon a letter of Cowper, as follows:

> Capt. Parker
> on board Sarah
> Griffin's Warf [*Sic*]
> Cask of wine
> Stone Bottlells [*Sic*]
> A Cradle &c.

He appends a facsimile, and any one may see that the true reading is:

. . . . .
Cask of wine,
Stone Bottle do.,
A Cradle, &c.

Cowper may therefore be acquitted of the charge of spelling a simple word like "bottles" in a way which suggests too frequent absorption of the contents of those same bottles. There are other mistakes, but why dwell on errors? These small flaws are of little moment.

We collectors sometimes get a glimpse of the interior of characters not vouchsafed to the rest of mankind. I wonder what Queen Victoria would have thought if I had shown her a letter, snugly buried in one of my most choice volumes, which she addressed to her gay and gallant Premier Melbourne, before she espoused Prince Albert. Here it is:

If Lord Melbourne isn't very tired, c'd he come here? He needn't dress, but can come just as he is. The Queen would see him up-stairs in her own room. I have heard much wh. enrages me, & it w'd be such a thing if you c'd come here for a minute, unless you are *very* tired; it w'd quiet me. Just say yes, or no. If you c'dn't get your carriage quickly, I c'd send mine. I hear you

spoke so beautifully. The Duke must be in his dotage.

Is it not delightful to feel the humanity of this artless utterance of the young girl who had just assumed the crown which she wore so nobly for more than sixty years? We may wonder whether, when the snows of eighty-one winters were on her brow, she could recall distinctly the time of her dashing, showy prime minister.

Whenever I feel anxious about my precious health, as we old fellows are apt to do, and am complaining of the incompetency of my physicians, I burrow in the mass of *English Literary* over there in the corner, just under the Romney sketch and the portrait of Henry Clay, in order to pull out John Ruskin's screed, which always consoles me. Thus writes the master of English prose, under date of July 24, 1871:

MY DEAREST TOM, — Really your simplicity about naughty *me* is the most comic thing I know, among all my old friends. *Me* docile to doctors! I watched them (I had three) to see what they knew of the matter; did what they advised, for two days; found they were utterly ignorant of the illness and were killing me. I had inflammation of the bowels, and they gave me ice! and tried to nourish me with milk! Another twelve hours

and I should have been past hope. I stopped in the *middle* of a draught of ice-water, burning with insatiable thirst—thought over the illness myself steadily—and ordered the doctors out of the house. Everybody was in an agony, but I *swore* and raged till they had to give in—ordered hot toast and water in quantities, and mustard poultices to the bowels. One doctor had ordered fomentation; that I persevered in, adding mustard to give outside pain. I used brandy and water as hot as I could drink it, for stimulant—kept myself up with it—washed myself out with floods of toast and water—and ate nothing and refused *all* medicine. In twenty-four hours I had brought the pain under—in twenty-four more I had healthy appetite for meat, and was safe—but the agony of poor Joanna! forced to give me meat, for I ordered roast chicken instantly—when the doctors, unable to get at me, were imploring *her* to prevail on me not to kill myself, as they said I should. The poor thing stood it nobly, of course; none of them could move me one whit. I forced them to give me cold roast beef and mustard at two o'clock in the morning! And here I am, thank God, to all intent and purpose quite well again—but I was within an ace of the grave—and I know now something of doctors that—well, I thought Molière hard enough on them—but he's complimentary to what I shall be after this. Thanks for all your good love—but *do* try to understand me a little better—indocilest, when I choose, of human creatures—but yours, most affectionately,

JOHN RUSKIN.

Mr. Ruskin is amusing and his supreme self-satisfaction is delightful. We are all of us vain, but not quite as vain as that.

This fable teaches, as our boyhood friend Æsop used to say, that the habit of intellectual domination will sometimes array a man even against his physician. Charles O'Conor was quite unlike John Ruskin, yet they resembled each other in their possession of an indomitable will. Everybody knows the story of Mr. O'Conor's miraculous rally after the doctors had given him up. He simply willed that he should live.

I have a vivid recollection of the great lawyer. He was a "character." He had a melancholy, subservient slave in his office, named Effingham. Really, that was not his name, but it will do. Poor old Effingham would sometimes greet his master of a morning with fawning politeness, hand-rubbing, genuflecting, saying, "It's a fine day, Mr. O'Conor." Whereupon the jurist, fixing a cold and glittering eye upon his affable clerk, would reply: "Effingham! I am in good health and in full possession of my senses; I *know* that it is a fine day, and I do not need to have *you* remind me of it." When he walked down-town with his office-boy, and the boy became separated from him in the crowded street, he would say to the lad, in his

precise and frigid way, "Why do you *avoid* me?"

But I am growing reminiscent, and that is a sign of advancing years. We must curb this tendency. We must not let it grow upon us. Presently we may find ourselves writing memoirs, the last refuge of a man whose procession has gone by.

II

I DO not know what is to become of us if this type-writing mania continues to possess mankind. Our great men do not write letters now; they dictate their thoughts to stenographers, and one cannot even be sure that the machine-made affair is not signed by a secretary with a rubber stamp. It is not easy to imagine Washington, Jefferson, or John Adams thus degrading the art of correspondence. It is not a question of party, for Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Bryan are neither of them guiltless. It is sad to reflect that in future ages our successor-collectors, engaged in making "sets" of Presidents, Vice-Presidents, or Governors, will be forced to content themselves with the monotonous-looking pages of type, and will be puzzled to decide whether or not the signature, like John Phœnix's famous autograph, was written by "one of his most intimate friends." The type-writing machine is the discourager of autograph enterprise, the grave of artistic collecting, the tomb of ambition. There is

an eminent judge in this town who does his own type-writing, and has the hardihood even to print his signature with the addition of "X, his mark." Could depravity be carried further!

The ability to spell correctly is not vouchsafed to all men. A few moments ago, in rummaging about for a missing A. L. S., I ran across this example:

HARTFORD, N. Y., *February 6th.*

DEAR SIR,—I dont thing it possible to get my photograph. They have been mostly ameteur things.

Very truly yours,
STEPHEN CRANE.

This reminds one of Artemus Ward's celebrated remark about Chaucer being a great poet, but "he couldn't spel." It shows too the not uncommon error of writing a word in place of another having a somewhat similar sound. No doubt poor Crane's mind was dwelling on other things than spelling.

Readers of American political history will recall the fact that the enemies of Andrew Jackson were accustomed to ridicule him for his alleged illiteracy and his shortcomings in the spelling department of the language. The general habitually made his a's like o's, and hence it was charged against him that he

did not know how to spell his own name. I have carefully examined a great many letters of the hero of New Orleans, and have failed to discover any evidence of ignorance on his part. It is true that his spelling was old-fashioned, and, curiously enough, his mistakes are almost all made in the matter of doubling letters. I have one letter before me as I write, in which I find these words: "allways," "Allabama," "untill," and "dificulty," and he drops the "g" in "bantling." A venerable friend who knew the old general tells me that he used to write "boosom" for "bosom." Yet he never seems to have had any "dificulty" with the long, hard words. But, after all, what does it profit us to find fault with the spelling of the stanch patriot who said, "The Federal Union, it must be Preserved!" and preserved it. One of my Jackson letters is a fair example of his official style:

GEORGETOWN, 18 *Nov.* 1815.

SIR,—The resolution of the legislature of New York, which you were charged to transmit to me, expressive of their gratitude to myself and my brave associates in arms for the preservation of New Orleans, was received in due time; but a multiplicity of business prevented me from acknowledging its receipt sooner.

For myself & my associates I beg to return the most sincere thanks for the kind manner in

which that respectable body has been pleased to speak of our exertions.

Undoubtedly these exertions were attended with very extraordinary success—but no more, I think, than we may always look for when our cause is just and Heaven is on our side. No people in the world are more capable than ours of the "highest military results" when they fight for the dear inheritance of their independance, if a fair opportunity be afforded them of displaying the qualities which really belong to them.

I have the honor to be
With great respect
Yr mo. obt. st.
ANDREW JACKSON,
Major Genl comdg D of
the South

Excellency
DANL D. TOMPKINS,
NEW YORK.

There is about this epistle that semi-grandiloquence of the period in which it was written, and the usual appropriation of Heaven as an ally of the side which won. But it is dignified and suitable, and quite unexceptionable, although the general had a slight accident when he encountered the word "independence."

Any mention of Jackson naturally recalls his successor in the Presidency, the much-maligned Martin Van Buren, whose memory has suffered greatly because we have allowed our history to be written for us so largely by New England Whigs and abolitionists. I am

rejoiced that, in these later days, some justice has been done to the great lawyer and conscientious statesman in the admirable biography which Edward M. Shepard has given us in the *American Statesmen* series.

Mr. Van Buren, in the latter part of his life, began the preparation of an *Autobiography*, and brought it down to a time shortly before his Vice-Presidency. It was never finished, and has never been published. I had the privilege of examining the manuscript some years ago, and it is to be regretted that circumstances have prevented the present possessor from giving it to the public. The style is somewhat diffuse, and there are many long discussions of obsolete matters of controversy which a judicious editor might easily condense; but there is a great deal of historical value in the record. I ventured to transcribe a page relating to John Quincy Adams, which affords a fair example of the contents of the *Autobiography*:

John Quincy Adams was as honest & incorruptible as his father. He was equally bold & fearless in the avowal and maintenance of his opinions, & in his feelings & habits more Democratic. In respect to the unaffected simplicity of his manners & the slight value he placed upon the pride & pomp of office, he did not fall behind any of our Democratic Presidents, not excepting

Mr. Jefferson, who it will be remembered by a few, so outraged the sensibilities of the sticklers for official dignity by wearing red breeches & tying his horse to a peg, when he had occasion to visit the Capitol. Brought up, as was at that day the universal custom, & is still too much the case, in the belief that there could be nothing good in our opponents, I entered public life with strong prejudices against Mr. Adams. Although I had not the good fortune to be in favour with the administration, or to be partially regarded by himself whilst he was the head of Mr. Monroe's cabinet, and was ranked among opponents of his own administration, from first to last, my respect for his character as a straightforward, well-meaning man lasted from my first acquaintance with him in my Senatorial capacity, till the close of his life. His personal demeanor towards me was invariably respectful & as cordial as I could desire.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Van Buren deliberately sacrificed any chances he had for the Presidential nomination in 1844 by his letter against the annexation of Texas, "one of the finest and bravest pieces of political courage," and one which "deserves from Americans a long admiration."[1]

It will be remembered that in 1852 a good deal of fun was showered upon that stalwart veteran, General Winfield Scott, then Whig

[1] Shepard's *Van Buren*, p. 407.

candidate for the Presidency, because in some letter of denial which became public he referred to himself as writing it "after a hasty plate of soup." It may be of interest to note that the expression was a common one with the general, and that it was employed semi-facetiously. Here is a letter of his written in 1851, a year before the one which tickled all the Democrats so mightily:[1]

SATURDAY, *May* 31 [1851].

MY DEAR GENERAL,—Having just made the acquisition of a fine green turtle, I, on a sudden thought, beg you to join me in "a hasty plate of soup" to-day, at 5 o'clock.

Very truly yours,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

GEN'L TOTTEN.

Certainly there is something laughable about "a hasty plate of soup," suggestive of a stout, military gentleman, with napkin under chin, ladling the hot compound down his throat in a tearing hurry, and perhaps spilling it upon his gorgeous uniform. The American people will not endure heroes who expose themselves to ridicule, as we have seen of late in the case of an honored admiral.

[1] This is all a mistake, and one which I have corrected on page 131, but I let it rest here to show how even I can make mistakes and how futile it is to base conclusions on premises which are insufficient.

The general was a fine old gastronomic expert. He was inordinately fond of terrapin, and one of his favorite speeches was as follows: "This little, ugly, black-legged animal that carries his house with him is obliged to seek his living in the swamps and solitary coves, among the rushes, and to burrow in mud; and yet he is sought after with painful diligence, and the dish prepared from his flesh is honored at the feasts of the rich and the brave."[1]

The same friend who recorded this eloquent tribute to the pride of Maryland also says that he once offered to bet a dinner that if the general should be invited to dine with the party at any time within a month, and have terrapin prepared by his favorite cook, he—the general—"would during the dinner say and do the following things in manner following: He would, while leaning his left elbow on the table, having some of the terrapin on his fork, held raised about six inches above his plate, exclaim: 'This is the best food vouchsafed by Providence to man!' and then carry it immediately to his mouth. The other thing he would do was that, leaning on the table in manner aforesaid, he would pour wine from one glass into another." Nobody took the bet.

[1] Gen. E. D. Keyes, *Fifty Years' Observations.*

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

A distinguished New York lawyer tells me that he once attended a dinner at Francis B. Cutting's house, where the general was a guest, and that he saw the famous soldier drink more claret than he ever supposed a mortal man could absorb. But a giant six feet four inches in height and bulky in proportion requires more sustenance than a person of ordinary dimensions, and as the general lived to within a fortnight from his eightieth birthday, neither terrapin nor wine could have injured him very much.

The general, besides being a royal gourmand and a person of unusual size, was probably as vain a man as may be discovered outside of the realm of literature. If one should adopt George Derby's numerical system of comparison, and should say that the vanity of the most self-conceited author in the world—he still lives, but I dare not give his name—might be represented by 65, Scott's self-appreciation must be at least 97. General Keyes was reading to him an article on Henry Clay, in which the size of Clay's mouth was referred to, and the writer had added that Burke, Mirabeau, and Patrick Henry all had mouths of extraordinary size, concluding with the remark, "All great men have large mouths." "All great men have large mouths!" exclaimed the general. "Why,

my mouth is not above three-fourths the size it should be for my bulk!"[1]

It is not to be wondered at that the general gave to mankind what is perhaps the most frankly egotistical autobiography ever known. He usually refers to himself as "Scott." I have just found a letter of the general's which gives a fair view of his method of judging those who declined to bow down and worship him. It was written to Hon. James Monroe—not the President, but a member of Congress from New York:

AUGUSTA, MAINE, *March* 12, 1839.
Twelve o'clock at night.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have received three letters here from you, written at Washington, and am infinitely hurt on the subject of the claim to the small sum of $19.52 which Mr. Wright promised to move to have inserted by way of *amendment* in some appropriation bill which had passed the House of Representatives. So much for my strict attention to public duties; for if I could have come by Washington instead of proceeding from one important service to another—from the Cherokee country to the Canada border, direct, the account, instead of being placed in the hands of that ass, Mr. Attorney-General Grundy, would have been allowed as a matter of course, without dissent or hesitation. But he who devotes himself to the public, need not hope to find anybody, in office, willing to attend to his private interests.

[1] Keyes, *Fifty Years' Observations*, p. 10.

I am truly disgusted with the illiberality and injustice I have experienced in this small matter—small to the public; but so great to me as almost to cripple my capacity to be useful to that public.
. . . Your friend,
WINFIELD SCOTT.

It is certainly indicative of a lack of sense of proportion, this idea that a matter of $19.52 should cripple the usefulness of so great a man. It is not hard to understand why he should have been about the worst defeated of the unsuccessful candidates for the Presidency.

Perhaps it is unwise for a collector to be omnivorous. One is disposed to sympathize with the German scholar who devoted a life to the Greek noun, and upon his dying bed lamented that he had not limited himself to the dative case. But, truly, a devoted disciple of the cult will not be satisfied by collecting in a single line. My friend Ambrose was devoted to Napoleoniana. He spurned the tempting literary, the attractive military, and the insidious dramatic; all his enthusiasm was reserved for his special prizes, and he revelled particularly in the undecipherable scrawls of the great emperor. He carried his hobby so far as to delight even in Napoleon the Little, who called himself "the Third," to leave room for the poor little "Aiglon." How my friend ever came to part

with them I do not know, but one day, in a fit of generosity, after I had discovered for him a few lines of Napoleon I. which resembled a combination of the worst misdeeds of Rufus Choate, Horace Greeley, and Lord Houghton, he presented to me three letters of Louis Napoleon, all addressed to a person called "Lizzy," who was, under the later empire, "Madame la Comptesse de Beauregard." Here is one of them:

DEAREST LIZZY, — I hope when the first impression will be gone you will find that, the *necessity* of my marrying being accepted, I could do nothing better. You will find that person without any *prejuges* and without the *morgue* of a foreign princess. Tell allways to Giles what you wish I may do for you, and believe that my sincere affection for you will never cease.

This was written on January 21, 1853. On January 29 he married "that person," to wit, Eugénie Marie de Montijo. I am not sure that the name of the gentleman to whom Lizzy was to tell what she wished was "Giles," but I observe that Louis Napoleon and General Jackson thought alike on one subject, the word "allways." A little later we find the emperor writing to "dearest Lizzy" — now Comptesse de Beauregard—"I shall give to you at the end of the month the 150,000 francs." For Lizzy's sake let us hope that he paid promptly.

Dearest Lizzy. I hope when the first impression will be gone you will find that the <u>impossibility</u> of my marrying him accepted I could do nothing better. You will find that person without any <u>prejudice</u> to without the imagine of a foreign princess. Tell always to give what you wish I may do for you. and believe that my sincere affection for you will never cease.

Your sincere [illegible]

But little did he think that the records of his confidences would rest, half a century later, in the possession of an obscure person in "the States."

These meditations remind me somewhat of the Confessions of the Opium-Eater, because they are so different, as somebody once said about something else; I have no time to look up the record. Why is it that my mind goes constantly back to that odd, wonderful old man who was such a nuisance to his friends and who wrote so charmingly? Over there in the book-case where I keep the manuscripts of Southey's *Curse of Kehama* and Tom Moore's sugary *Epicurean*, is a volume of proof-sheets of De Quincey's *Leaders in Literature*, with his comical lectures to the compositor crowding the margins, all in the neat little chirography so characteristic of the man. He says to the printer:

> To Comp'r. What is the meaning of the *stop* after *dedicated?* How does the Comp'r construe the passage? "*to heav'n*" depends upon *dedicated*, and should follow it without a vestige of *any* stop whatever—not so much as the ghost of a departed *comma*.

And later he displays his insular hostility to the people who printed the first collected edition of his works, and paid him for them, in this note:

Cloistral surely is the adjective, not *cloisteral*, which was an impudent Yankee act of licentious change.

This letter was written to his publishers (Taylor & Hessey), probably about 1814, as the water-mark on the paper is of that year.

MY DEAR SIR, — This is the *beginning* up to the part you already have. There is a long note to come in at p. 3 (but on a separate sheet and half-sheet of paper) which I am afraid you will think irrelevant, as indeed it is. Yet people are so much amused always with literary gossip about authors that they know—as Crabbe, Maturin, &c—that I do not think it would be complained of. And it would much please me if it were retained, on account of the main proposal, which would in this situation attract more attention. However, we must all be resigned to the will of Editors.

Yours, in great hurry,
THOS d.Q.

The bit of *Phaedrus* which remains, which is the best bit, and *The Paris*, are the best part. I have been obliged to alter much, but I am writing as fast as I can.

He was "a little, pale-faced, woe-begone, and attenuated man, with a small head, a peculiar but not a large brow, and lustreless eyes; yet one who would pour into your ear a stream of learning, and talk like one inspired—or mad."[1]

[1] Gilfillan, quoted by S. C. Hall.

He dwelt so much in his talk upon his many bodily infirmities that Lamb said, "He should have employed as his publishers 'Pain & Fuss'" (Payne & Foss). "A most strange creature," said Lockhart. "The greatest master of language," said D. M. Moir. Perhaps this was exaggerated praise, but as Leslie Stephen justly remarks, "his fine musical ear and rich imagination enabled him to succeed so far as to become one of the great masters of English in what he calls the 'department of impassioned prose.'"

While we are on the subject of De Quincey, his familiar words recur to us: "For if once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination." So it is with the autograph collector who suffers himself to be led astray after portraits or wanders into the dangerous paths of extra-illustrating. He should restrict himself severely to the one essential thing and should not be enticed into perilous pursuits. Insatiate collector, will not one hobby suffice? Still, I confess that the fugacious portrait has a charm about it which makes a powerful appeal; the only objection to the quest of the plate is that it divides the attention, diverts the energies,

and scatters the forces of the ardent hunter. Some day, however, I mean to give expression of my views concerning the awful sin of extra-illustration; and I feel that I may be permitted to do so because, although not by any means the chief of sinners, I may say, as Napier did (or was it Lord Ellenborough, or perhaps Michael John Barry, in *Punch?*) so many years ago, "*Peccavi!*"

III

THE peaceful meditations of the gentle and inoffensive autograph collector are frequently disturbed by the painful reflection that some of his valuable acquisitions may not be autographs, after all. He is not particularly alarmed by the danger of forgery, for, except in the matter of highly expensive items, the peril of deliberate falsification is little to be feared. There have been instances where rogues have preyed upon the credulousness of careless but enthusiastic collectors, as in the case of the Burns manuscripts, and the absurd performances of that idiotic Frenchman who snapped up examples of Pontius Pilate, Alcibiades, Socrates, and, for aught I know, Homer, Alexander the Great, and Judas Iscariot —it was almost as bad as that. Then no student of American proclivities can ever forget the appalling record of Robert Spring, who skilfully fabricated Washingtons, Franklins, Lord Nelsons, and any eminent worthy who happened to be in demand. He sometimes pretended to

be the daughter of Stonewall Jackson, compelled by poverty to part with family papers, and he achieved the honor of a sketch in Appleton's *Cyclopaedia of American Biography.* But he departed this life in 1876, and since his day we have all grown more wary. The labor and expense of manufacturing a really deceptive autograph letter so cunningly as to deceive a prudent person is too great to afford any serious inducement to the pursuit of that species of industry. Our misgivings come from innocent copies and from the confusion of names. It was only a few days ago that I rejoiced in discovering among a friend's memorabilia—kindly placed at my disposal—this relic of the closing days of the Rebellion:

WAR DEPARTMENT, CHARLOTTE, N. C.,
April 25, 1865.

GEN'L, — Should you think it impracticable to move off the infantry and artillery, allow Lt. Gen'l Hampton to receive such of the men of those arms as may desire to join the cavalry service, together with such transportation and other animals as they require.

Very respectfully
Your ob't serv't,
J. C. BRECKINRIGE,
Sec. of War.

GEN'L J. E. JOHNSTON,
GREENSBORO, N. C.

I confess that I did not pause to observe that the name of the Confederate Secretary of War

was incorrectly spelled, for here was a letter written only the day before Johnston surrendered. My friend was quick, however, to inform me that it was a copy, in Johnston's hand, of the last despatch received by him from the dying government of the Southern Confederacy. I have taken care that my executors shall not put it off on any unsuspecting purchaser as an original. It is worthy of preservation as it is, but it is not the thing it seems to be, and, strange to say, the writing is not unlike that of the former Vice-President of the United States.

It was not so long ago that a very reputable dealer sent to me a fine letter by a rare Confederate general—autographically rare, I mean —which turned out to be a copy made by John A. Campbell, once a Justice of the Supreme Court and a man of infinitely greater distinction than the military person in question. These are the things which cause us to experience a dreadful sensation of uncertainty about the contents of our cabinets and portfolios.

There is another danger which may beset the path of the unwary enthusiast, but which has no terrors for the expert—the modern "reproduction" by the aid of photography. They do wonderful work in these days, and I was once deceived for just a moment. His Reverence the D.D. and I were enjoying the hospitality

of the accomplished and erudite Horace Hart, Comptroller of the Clarendon Press, in his attractive den in the University Printing Office at Oxford, where, by-the-way, they divide the building into "Bible Side" and "Learned Side," conveying the idea that learning and the Bible are as far apart as North and South. Mr. Hart had just given me a genuine letter of Gladstone, and he turned over the pages of a portfolio from which he drew a quarto sheet. "Ah, old Sam Johnson, the humbug!" he said. "See how he writes to his wife: 'Dearest Tetty,—After hearing that you are in so much danger as I apprehend from a hurt on a tendon, I shall be unhappy till I know you are recovered,' and so forth. Here, you can have this," and he gave it to me, a genial smile irradiating his scholarly countenance. My heart jumped as I seized the paper, but the *feel* of it told me instantaneously that it was only one of the marvellous products of that amazing "Clarendon Press."

There should be some statute to prevent two distinguished personages from having the same name. How was I to know that Benjamin Harrison, the Signer, had a son of that name, who appears, however, to have been contented to remain obscure, and who wrote letters contemporaneously with his patriotic parent. A

few days ago a smiling expert remarked to my face, "Gratz says that your John Vining, of Delaware (Old Congress, 1784–86), must have been the father of the congressman." It is the sad truth, for my letter is dated in 1767 and the congressman was born in 1758. So there is another gap. Then there is John Gardner, of Rhode Island, who, I find, has smuggled himself into my set where his son ought to be. It is simply distressing, and when I become aware of the fact that I have been eagerly picking up the pen-marks of my great-great-great grandfather under the impression that they were those of his son, Philip Livingston, the Signer, I am tempted to send the whole mass of paper to Bangs and take up the fad of old furniture. The pangs I have suffered in the effort to find out whether a certain letter was written by George Eliot or by Lewes defy description. I can accept with equanimity the documents of the old French kings, because we all know that the kings rarely signed anything, and that their secretaries did the work for them, so that we have no illusions about these royal records. But George Eliot should have made Lewes refrain from imitating her chirography and thus rendering the lives of long-suffering collectors a burden to them.

This genuine letter of George Eliot at last

came into my hands. It is addressed to "My very dear Martha," and is dated "Coventry, May 21st, 1841." It is signed, in a flowery fashion, "Clematis." She says:

Being at length quite naturalized in this our adopted country, and at liberty to stretch the wings of thought & memory behind my own nest & bush, I am determined to remind you of my existence & to enlighten you as the metaphysician says concerning its modes. But the desire for similar information about you is paramount to persuading me to write, & I have as many queries rising to my lips, as if you were here to have them orally delivered, would make you wish, like Rosalind, that the answers were corked up in you like wine in a bottle, so as to pop forth one after another. I imagine an interesting event must be approaching amongst you similar to me. We expect soon to enter on *our* family chronicle, no other you will guess than the marriage of my brother, which I hope will occur on the 8th of June. Your undeserved affection will I think cause you to rejoice with me in the rich blessings that are contained and superadded to me in our new abode. You will remember that I had forebodings as to the influence of a change on my dear father, these are all dissipated and I can decidedly say that I never before saw him so happy as he apparently is at present. . . . If it were permissible to express a regret amid so many unmerited mercies, I should mention my lack of a free range for walking which I so enjoyed at Griffe, with the deprivation of that "propinquity of shade" of which I am

a not less ardent lover than Cowper himself. . . . It is the prerogative of friendship to dignify the gift even of a few hairs, & I question whether from a bald friend we should not cherish the paring of a nail as a relic—hence I draw an inference favourable to the prospects of my worthless letter, which I am sure to hope you will receive with pleasure as a proof of the remembrance & affection of your true CLEMATIS.

Then there is John Dryden, whose autograph is not by any means common. I had long rejoiced in two "documents signed," and amused myself with the confident belief that I possessed the veritable sign-manual of the dramatist and laureate. To be sure, one document was signed "John Driden," and that should have aroused suspicion, but my nature is unsuspicious, and spelling of names in those times was not an exact science. Now, after a little research, I discover that these signatures may be of the poet's cousin, "John Driden," as he was wont to write the name, and I am in the depths of acute despair. I do not believe that the vendor intentionally deceived me; he was as foolish as I was, but I have learned a salutary lesson. It is still possible that I have the real autograph of the great man, but when once in doubt we are lost.

Dismissing painful thoughts like these, let us enjoy those pleasures which come to the

disciples of the *Religio Autographii*—if such an assault on the Latin tongue may be forgiven. Doubtless one may not murder a dead language. We have our genuine examples, beyond any doubt or cavil, and these we may pore over without being beset by nervous apprehensions.

My mind is agitated, for I am wholly unable to decide whether or not it is a good plan to assemble my treasures in what are known as "extra-illustrated" books. When they are scattered about in casual portfolios and wrappers, they seem to appeal to me to combine them, but after I have made the combination they appear to lose a large measure of their attractiveness. Extra-illustrated books are the sepulchres of portraits, but I doubt whether it is wise to convert them into catacombs of autographs. It is all very well to take some innocuous historical or biographical work and to overload it with plates, adding a few, but very few, minor autographs; but it really belittles a fine, full, and interesting letter to insist upon its permanent association with anything else, book or portrait. A good letter has an individuality, and even an appended portrait seems to detract from its absolute purity. If one must marry a letter to a portrait, the portrait must be one of the rarest, a member of the aristocracy of portraits. Still, I confess to a

weakness for some of the engravings, and I sneakingly hoard those which I encounter in the seductive catalogues, while I ostentatiously utter a feeble protest against the craze.

My "extra-illustrated" books—it is an abominable title—are becoming altogether too numerous, and are crowding out their betters. But when I wander over to the cases in the southwest corner of the library, where they most do congregate, and fondly scan their crushed-levant bindings, I am not quite willing to consign them to the obscurity of a back row or to send them to the auction-room. I take down the *Irvingiana*, the *Book Lover's Enchiridion*, the *Letters of the Colmans*, Forster's *Dickens*, *Crabbe Robinson's Diary*, *Kemble's Retirement from the Stage*, and the six-volume *Life of Bryant*, with the *Fitz-Greene Halleck*, and I find them full of comfort. Augustin Daly contrived to get together many good things, and the last-named book seems adorable to the old fogy who dwells fondly in recollections of mid-century American literature. I wish I could invite the cold and lonesome statue of the immortal author of *Marco Bozzaris*, sitting over in the Park, to abandon his solitary post and come in to warm himself between the cosey sheets of my goodly quarto, which boasts more portraits than pages of text.

I am referring to the Duyckinck *Halleck*, which is without autographs. It must have been either General James Grant Wilson or Prosper M. Wetmore who illustrated my two-volume, large-paper edition of the *Life of Halleck*, for it contains matter which could not very well come from any other source. There is a letter from General Wilson to Wetmore about the book; one from the poet's sister, Maria, to Wilson; one from James Lawson, Forrest's executor, to Wetmore; and other things which could have been obtained only from some one closely associated with Halleck; but, strangely enough, there is no letter of Halleck himself. There is one, however, in the large volumes of *Authors at Home*. He is writing to a futile person who beset American men of letters for autographs, under various pretences—I will not give his name:

GUILFORD, CT., *May 7*, '67.

DEAR SIR,—I was very sorry to hear from your favor of the 3d inst. that you have been for so long a time suffering severely from ill-health. Allow me to beg you to refrain from further mental exertion, as you have been advised, until your strength is fully restored. Your future writings and their readers will alike benefit by the expression of thoughts matured by calm and quiet meditation and arrangement. I have been highly gratified by the "Extracts" you have so kindly

sent me. Their publication in a volume would do you great credit, and make you useful in your pleasant labors, & I should be most glad to aid you in procuring it, had I any influence with publishers, but my experience has long since convinced me that their consultations with their brother craftsmen are deemed of more worth in judging of a book than the opinions of any member of the Brotherhood of Authors. I feel highly honored by your expressed willingness to accept the enclosed, and wish it were better worthy of a place among your cherished memorials. Hoping often to hear from your pen, and soon to learn that your health is no longer a subject of inquietude, I beg you to believe me, my dear sir,

Truly yours,

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

It makes one sad to think of so much sweet and cordial sympathy wasted on a mere humbug of an impostor.

They were talking some months ago at the club about reprinting some American classic in the well-known club style, and almost every one I spoke to on the subject exclaimed at once, "*The Scarlet Letter*"! I suppose that it is and will continue for years to be the distinctive American romance. My copy contains but a single autograph. It is a bill of one Benjamin Fabias against the United States of America for $49.09, for use of warehouse No. 33, Derby Wharf, Salem, and it would have long since gone the

way of all like vouchers were it not for the magic words at the foot thereof—"Correct: Nathl. Hawthorne, Surveyor."

There is nothing new to be said about Hawthorne; lives, sketches, memoirs, have shown him to the world from every possible point of view, so far as his shy and introspective nature may be shown at all; and Mr. Howells has lately added an "appreciation" which brings his personality still nearer to us. I can only let Hawthorne speak through his letters. One of them was written to Howitt while Hawthorne was Consul in Liverpool:

BRUNSWICK STREET,
LIVERPOOL, *May* 15, '54.

DEAR MR. HOWITT,—I thank you for your kind little note, and assure you that no commendation was ever sweeter to me than your own; for I have known Mrs. Howitt and yourself a very long while, and have spent a great many happy hours over your books. Our friend Mr. Fields has just sent me a work of your daughter's, which I have not yet had time to read. I hear praises from it on all hands. I shall not leave England without seeing you, and am very glad that you wish to see *me*.

Truly yours,
NATHL HAWTHORNE.

My other letter has been bound in my copy of Henry James's *Memoir*, and it was written the year before Hawthorne's death:

CONCORD, *Sept. 28th*, '63.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your note of 25th inst. has given me great pleasure, and I should be ungrateful not to acknowledge it. But you attribute to me a superiority which I do not dream of asserting. A reader who can fully understand and appreciate a work possesses all the faculties of the writer who produces it—except a knack of expression, by which the latter is enabled to give definite shape to an idea or sentiment which he and his appreciative reader possess in common. Thus the advantage on the author's part is but a slight one, and the more truth and wisdom he writes, the smaller is his individual share in it.

Yours very sincerely,
NATHL HAWTHORNE.

But with all the greatness of his deftly woven mysteries, his master-works of fiction, I come back with pleasure to the quaint and humorous pages of that early piece of drudgery, the *Peter Parley Universal History* and to the *Life of Franklin Pierce.*

The first-mentioned book we of advancing years remember well: "a very fat, stumpy-looking book," having in the text "very small wood-cuts, of the most primitive sort."[1] Hawthorne received one hundred dollars for his share in the work. James thinks that he has identified one phrase as that of Hawthorne. He is speaking of George IV. "Even when

[1] *Hawthorne*, by Henry James, p. 37.

he was quite a young man, this King cared as much about dress as any young coxcomb. He had a great deal of taste in such matters, and it is a pity that he was a King, for he might otherwise have made an excellent tailor." I am sure that there are scores of passages just as characteristic and just as worthy of credit.

The other book is a memorial of stanch and loving friendship, a record of the courage, sincerity, and simplicity of a man whose own sense of rectitude and of justice enabled him to disregard the narrow and partisan criticisms of the smaller and meaner fraction of our American community.

IV

LAURENCE HUTTON has a pleasant way of accumulating autographic riches. That genial personage contrives to bring together a varied assortment of astonishing things, and he understands the art of arranging them attractively. The autographo-maniac who is permitted to view the treasures stored in the pretty library in *Peep o' Day* may well consider himself a favorite of fortune. Hutton used to have a singular fondness for death-masks, which are only a sort of autograph—face-made rather than hand-made; but he is fonder yet of his memorabilia, and he shows them cheerfully—often parting with them generously for the benefit of others. As I think of him affectionately, I take down from the shelf a book called *Curiosities of the American Stage*, which with commendable foresight he arranged especially for easy extra-illustration, and I go back in reminiscence to that fascinating room which looks out over the hills and plains of Princeton. I think we may be able to find some autographs

scattered among the pages which will be worth meditating about—but not, I hope, too prosily.

As I turn the pages of Hutton's entertaining volume, the first thing I observe is that the publishers have the effrontery to say, "All rights reserved." I wonder what they mean. They certainly cannot arrogate to themselves the sole right to enjoy the book, or to crowd it as full of autographs and portraits as the purse and the patience of the proprietor will permit. But I do not believe that Harper and Brothers really meant to be grasping; and since the great old house has been reorganized, every one must hope that it has entered upon a new century of prosperity, even if the managers have sadly disarranged the time-honored boys with the flowers and the bubbles, depriving them of the scanty draperies in which they have disported themselves on the covers of the *Magazine* for more than fifty years.

We encounter at the outset the name, the portrait, and the autograph of that eminent, robust, and bulky-legged ornament of the boards, Edwin Forrest. Looking back on what may be called the middle ages of the American drama, we find ourselves marvelling how an intelligent people could become enthusiastic over such an actor as Forrest, who was noisy and pompous, and utterly without light and shade. When

we contemplate American art, American architecture, and the American stage of the "forty-fifties," we perceive that they were all of about the same degree of merit, and we reflect that, although we were sensitive and angry under the criticism of foreigners, those unpleasant foreigners were not far wrong. They should not have been so severe upon us; it was very rude indeed; but in this opening year of the greatest century of mankind we must admit that in those mediæval days we were in some respects as we were described in the immortal words of our Elijah Pogram, "rough as our barrs and wild as our buffalers." There is no self-humiliation involved in such a confession, for we were a young nation, trying to do in three hundred years what England required more than thrice three hundred years to accomplish.

Forrest was a magnate in his generation, and he occupied a large section of the public mind. Long time ago I saw and heard him—I certainly *heard* him—in that dismal play called "Virginius," and perhaps he came as near to being a Roman as Eugene Field came to being a Horace. His stalwart personality was somewhat impressive, although not altogether fascinating, and he stalked about, howled, and made many strange, loud sounds. I did

not find him great or convincing, and he exhibited as much delicacy as a New York cab-driver might display in rendering the part of Titania in "The Midsummer-Night's Dream."

But why should I ruffle the peaceful current of these meditations by abusing our distinguished tragedian? He filled a commanding position in the dramatic world; he was the typical American actor of his time; and he had the admiration not only of the populace, but of a great number of the people of culture and refinement. I may explain it very simply. He wrote this, which I have embalmed in the pages of my book:

DEAR SIR,—It is very tiresome to write these silly autographs.

Yours,

EDWIN FORREST.

BOSTON, *November* 14, 1855.

Observe the hideous Philistinism of that "note." Is it not enough to make the writer odious to all of my tribe? I am of the opinion that I have ample justification for the severest denunciation of any man who could deliberately pen such a self-accusing statement, particularly as he is dead and can never resent it.

Forrest grew to be unpopular in his later years on account of his divorce suit. The

"Forrest Case" was famous in its day, and Charles O'Conor gained great glory by winning a decisive victory over John Van Buren. "Prince John," of glorious memory, and the best stump speaker I ever listened to, was no match for O'Conor as a lawyer, and it was almost unconstitutional to set him against the great Irish jurist, for it was a cruel and unusual punishment. Public sentiment was with the woman, and some enthusiasts gave O'Conor pieces of silver, which he condescended to accept with his characteristic churlish coldness. As I look back upon it — and I have read the record carefully — I am inclined to think that the wrong was not all on one side. Forrest, to his credit, was dignified and consistent throughout. The conduct of madame was far from commendable, and, if she was innocent, it must be owned that the appearances were decidedly against her. She had the advantage of femininity; all the darling, logical, and discriminating females (they were then so called, as Cooper's pages will testify) were up in arms for her, and her liege lord was not by any means amiable or conciliatory. He won no sympathy; she had it all. I have some of Forrest's letters to James T. Brady, who later in the litigation acted as his counsel, and they are rather pitiful. The old lion roars quite sadly.

Here is one of his expressions, after an adverse decision:

Let not my words lead you to suppose that the recent judicial outrage weighs upon my heart and keeps me from my rest. It is not so. I feel this wrong as a man should feel it who has conscious right to sustain him, having only pity and contempt and a just indignation for the time-serving and corrupt authors of this monstrous wrong, which, though aimed at me, must one day fall with crushing effect upon their own heads and consign them to the infamy of all coming time. A wrong done to the humblest citizen is a wrong done to the whole Republic, was wisely said by an ancient lawgiver. By this base act the judges in my case have violated their oaths of office. By this base act they have legalized and rewarded prostitution. By it they have taught their wives and daughters that infamy has a price beyond virtue. . . . As God is just, I shall yet be righted. The American public has long since rendered a verdict adverse to the corrupt decision made by these legal assassins, a verdict which is already recorded in the hearts of all right-minded and honest people. . . . A great crime has been committed by our judiciary, and the names of the criminals ought to be known—they should be bruited abroad that men may see that in a free country such things cannot be done with impunity. To prevent a repetition of the offence, the offenders should be scourged, and where the offence is let the great axe fall. And what scourging is so effectual as to keep the names of these

ermined tyrants a mockery and a scorn forever in the mouths of men?

I think I hear the galleries thunder. No one but a grandiloquent, self-sufficient, old-fashioned actor could have written such a letter. It reminds me of the familiar anecdote of Martin Grover, that singularly gifted, witty, and learned judge, about the lawyer who had two remedies when beaten at *nisi prius*—one being an appeal, and the other a resort to the Angelica tavern, where he could "cuss the court." It was of our old friend O'Conor, when he was spouting concentrated venom over his defeat by the highest court, in the Tweed case, that Grover said, "He has taken his only remedy."

It is pleasant to pass from sturdy, passionate, belligerent Forrest to that lovable man John McCullough, who writes:

> If my poor services can be of any use to you for your benefit, I will only be too glad to show you how thoroughly I appreciate your kind and manly efforts in my behalf during my engagement in Boston.

And here is Laura Keene! How every old New-Yorker's pulse must beat at the sound of that name!

Dion Boucicault follows, and brings visions of Sir Charles Coldstream, of the ancient Winter

Garden days before the war, and of the later "Shaughraun." Then we find John Owens, whose Solon Shingle and famous "bar'l of appel sass" convulsed us in the sixties. I question whether the casual reader of to-day recalls the memory of the famous negro tragedian, Ira Aldridge. This is a letter of his, dignified in the extreme:

BOSTON, *April* 10, 1861.

MADAM,—Having ascertained your address, I hasten to express my thanks for the flattering letter you did me the honor of sending me. It is, at all times, cheering to the heart of an artiste [*sic*] to receive a friendly expression of approval, and this gratification is all the greater when he is indebted to a lady of refined mind and judgement for such an act of kindness.

Assuring you that I shall ever regard your welcome letter with a feeling of gratitude,

I have the honor to be,
Madam,
Your obedient servant,
IRA ALDRIDGE.

It is a relief from this stateliness to run across a reminder of one who delighted us for full thirty years—that sterling actor, James Lewis. He says:

DEAR LOUISA,—There is a five-dollar bill waiting for you in the flat for the kids. Sorry we were out yesterday. Try again!

All of the moderately old boys will confess to a sensation when they come upon the dashing chirography of Lydia Thompson. "Dear Mr. Massett," she writes, to poor "Jeems Pipes," long since consigned to the limbo of forgotten scribblers, "with pleasure I send you three seats for Friday night. . . . I remember your visit to me in Park Lane." Of course she remembered it, and Massett saw to it that she should not forget it. Was there ever such delicious burlesquing as in those days when Lydia revelled in the excruciating puns of "Aladdin," with Harry Beckett and Pauline Markham, whose "vocal velvet" was eulogized so enthusiastically by that learned pundit, Richard Grant White.

Ristori writes in her Italian language, and I must perforce let it go by. Charles Fechter's letter is in French, and he says: "*Vous devez penser des monstruosités de ce drôle qui à nom Charles Fechter.*" And here is a loyal line from John Gilbert: "To Lester Wallack, Esq., with the sincere regards of his old friend and comrade in art, John Gilbert." This takes me back to the palmy days of Wallack's, at Thirteenth Street and Broadway, where, as Miles McKenna, the stalwart Gilbert fell down on receiving the daintiest of taps from Elliot Grey (Lester) in that fascinating "Rosedale,"

whose words we almost knew by heart, and whose *entr'acte* music, by old Tom Baker, we committed to memory. The good Gilbert was a very amiable villain; but when Lester sang "Lord Bateman" and "As I was walkin' down the Strand," we thought it the perfection of vocal beauty. Mario, Campanini, Jean de Reszke—none of them could rival in our estimation the *cantabile* utterances of the adorable Elliot Grey! But I must close the book and fly to some other topic; for, if I become further involved in theatrical recollections, I shall never be able to extricate myself successfully.

If any one takes the trouble to read these records of the reflections of an ancient and confirmed autograph crank, he must remember that it is the privilege of age to be garrulous and unmethodical. After a while one loses the capacity to be consecutive and orderly. When I was in Princeton I was taught to be precise and regular in the matter of composition, with my introduction, my proposition, my discussion, and my peroration. It is a blessed privilege to be able to throw the introduction in the fire, dash the proposition out of window, cast the discussion in the waste-basket, and toss the peroration after it. Hawthorne's clergyman on a wild spree in foreign countries

typifies my feelings in regard to conventional rules and rhetorical regulations. I scorn to be fettered by them. There is not the slightest consecutiveness about these meditations; that, to my mind, is their only justification. Wherefore I swerve suddenly from Hutton and the stage, and come back to American political autographiana.

We fiends are much given, of course, to the making of what we call "sets," and sometimes we are put to great trouble in order to obtain the necessary duplicates. Washington is not so difficult, for he is only General, Old Congress, Constitutional Convention, and President; and while he is expensive, he is not rare. Everybody saves the letters of a persistently great man, but the accidentally and suddenly notable character is autographically scarce. George Dewey and George Du Maurier are examples, and their purchase-value quickly rose from below par to a high premium. There has been a slight decline in the market, but they are still gilt-edged after a fashion. When Mr. McKinley was an Ohio congressman he figured in the list at the common one-dollar rate, but now, after his elevation to the Presidency and his tragic death, he ranks with the rarest, and even a type-written L. S.[1] is catalogued in capitals.

[1] Letter signed.

Take, for example, that eminent scholar, soldier, and statesman, John Adams Dix. He turns up triumphantly among the Secretaries of the Treasury, the Governors of New York, the Senators of the United States, the foreign ministers, and the generals of the Civil War. I believe that Mr. Depew once said of him that he came to America in the *Mayflower* and threatened to go over to the Indians if the Pilgrim Fathers would not elect him to an office. His fine, bold handwriting is always impressive, and one is never in doubt about its absolute genuineness. The old general was an admirable specimen of American manhood, and he served the State honorably in almost every possible capacity. We do not often find his equal in public life. I well remember his gentleness and cordial kindness when he was the commander of the military department of southern Virginia, and I was fortunate enough to come within the circle of his friendship. He was then engaged in that rather remarkable occupation for a "modern major-general," the translation into English of the noble hymn, "Dies Iræ"; and I think that his translation is one of the best ever made. I shall never forget that a fat and jovial aide, a captain yclept "Tom L——," when asked what the general was busy about, answered that "the general is writing a Cicero."

The general's son, Charles Temple Dix, was an artist of great merit, and a soldier with an honorable record. He was also a genial, whole-souled lad, and an intimate friend of Charles F. Browne, best known to fame as Artemus Ward. Every one remembers how Louis Philippe, the pear-headed Citizen King of the French, was borne away from Paris in a cab, murmuring plaintively "*Comme Charles X.!*" The story is told that one night—perhaps it was one morning—Charles Dix and Artemus arrived at the hospitable domicile of the general in West Twenty-first Street, much comforted by their glorious dining, and feigning undue exhilaration. In response to the ringing of the bell, the general appeared in night-clothes, wrathful, indignant, and sleepy, and he said: "Browne, you're drunk!" To him Artemus, with a grin, and pointing to his companion, "*Comme Charles Dix!*"

It comes to my mind how the general roared with laughter over Ward's screeds and John Phœnix's inimitable sketches, for the general was not only a scholar, but a man of broad and comprehensive intellectual qualities.

The student of American history does not need to be told that the great glory of Dix was his memorable despatch, in the dawning days of the rebellion, which made him forever famous

—"If any one attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot!" That utterance gave an electric shock to the loyal heart of the nation. Artemus, in pretended concern, made the general merry when he said, in his modest, hesitating way, "But—general—suppose he hadn't any spot!"

It was my good luck to hear Artemus give one of his famous lectures. As I recall it, the subject was "The Mormons." Poor Browne was even then suffering from the disease which ultimately took him out of the world long before his time. He was ailing and his voice was feeble. He wandered upon the platform in his usual diffident and embarrassed way, and said, "Ladies—and—gentlemen—I am sorry—but I have a very bad cold to-night—and I am afraid —that my voice—will not reach beyond the reserved seats." Then, as though blessed with a sudden inspiration, and with the air of one who has discovered the solution of a difficult problem, he continued, beaming and cheerful, "So we will consider *all* the seats reserved this evening."

There is no particular association between Ward and Judah P. Benjamin, but I have just taken out of the wrapper a letter of Benjamin's in order to transfer it from Senators to Confederate Cabinet, and I cannot help pondering

over it for a moment. What an extraordinary career that man had! He was born in the West Indies; he was a Jew; and he became a school-teacher in Louisiana. He rose to the head of the legal profession in his adopted State; was a Senator from 1853 to 1861; was Attorney-General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State under the Southern Confederacy; he was "the brains of the Confederacy"; he fled to England; studied law at Lincoln's Inn; was admitted to practice in England at fifty-five; wrote one of the best law-books of the century; and attained the highest place in that most exclusive of bodies, the bar of Great Britain.

I heard his farewell address to the Senate of the United States, after the secession of Louisiana in 1861. Who could forget the beauty of his voice or the grace of his delivery! If ever a man had a voice which might be called "silvery," it was Benjamin; and after the lapse of forty years it still rings in my ears as though I had heard it only yesterday. He commands my unqualified admiration, even if he was, as old Ben Wade sardonically remarked, "a Hebrew with Egyptian principles."

Notwithstanding my vivid recollection of Benjamin's voice, I find in Mr. Serjeant Robinson's *Reminiscences of the Bench and Bar*

the remark that it "had about it what we are in the habit of deeming the very worst of American twangs." I venture to say that this is an instance of British self-complacency. The liquid Southern tone of Benjamin was absolutely twangless, and it was, as compared with the hollow, rough, and coarse bow-wow of the Englishman, like the song of the nightingale beside the caw of the crow. The foolish assertion of the learned Serjeant, who I am glad to say records himself as one of the last of an ancient race—a dinosaurus lingering in the haunts of civilization — is based upon a syllogism characteristic of his nation: "All voices which are not English are twangy: Benjamin's was not English; therefore it was twangy."

But Benjamin grew to be very English. Eloquent to the highest degree, he abjured eloquence. My friend, the ex-judge, told me the other day that in conversation with Lord Russell he once spoke of his old acquaintance, Benjamin, as eloquent. "We do not think him eloquent," said Lord Russell. The fact was that he suppressed his glowing warmth of oratory because it was unsuited to the clime; and for a like reason he said "Me lud," and occasionally dropped his h's. But Benjamin would have adapted himself to the moon if he

could have migrated to that satellite, and had he found the inhabitants limiting themselves on principle to a single eye, he would have cheerfully put out one of his own in order to conform to the customs of the country.

V

THE editor of a magazine, for whom I have the highest regard, saw fit, some time ago, to criticise gently an innocent remark of mine about the use of autographs in extra-illustration. He must remember that these desultory jottings, with all their sins and imperfections, are only the staggerings of the mind of an ancient collector, the maunderings of an obsolete person. I did not mean to enter upon the record an objection against the arrangement of a "set" of autographs, incidentally accompanied by a few printed pages, where a rivulet of text may meander through a meadow of autographs. But in most extra-illustrated books the text and the plates seem to assume the leadership; they elbow themselves rudely to the front, with an air of odious self-importance; they take the centre of the stage and stand in the full glare of the lime-light. As a faithful, although a superannuated devotee at the shrine of Autographina, I complain whenever my divinity is treated with disrespect.

I am not the first one to allow my reason to surrender to my affections, and with all their faults I love those "Granger" books still. One will say to himself, in meditation, "Away with them! let them be *anathema maranatha!*" the precise import of which curse I am cloudy about, but I suppose that it has substantially the same effect as that which is produced by the Speaker of the House of Commons when he "names names." Yet within two days, this irate enemy of Grangerization may be found coquetting with his favorite bookseller about the materials for a new example of illustrated enormity, and, like another Donna Julia, whispering he will ne'er consent, consents flagrantly. Half the pleasure lies in being tempted and in yielding to the temptation with the sweet consciousness of guilt as a consolation.

On reflection, I believe that I have been mistaken in spending so much time and so considerable a portion of my slender means in gathering Signers, Old Congressmen, Presidents, Cabinet, Governors, and others of that ilk, for the literary field is by far the most fascinating. Men meet there on a common ground; the political is ephemeral, while the literary is eternal. A certain man once made himself a driveller and a show by paying an enormous

price for a "Gabriel Jones, M. O. C., Va.," so that all catalogues issued since that event, and boasting a specimen of Gabriel, remind us that "specimen fetched [*sic*] $80 at a Philadelphia auction sale." In confidence, it was $82, as I happen to know. The reference in the catalogues is the sort of sly suggestion which touches the sensibilities of the lamb who ventures into the Wall Street of Autographia. Now my friend might have had a letter of Wordsworth for less than one-tenth of the money squandered on Jones—a thing of beauty compared with the costly scrawl of the Virginia congressman, who has no real value except as one of a series. The name of Jones twinkles like a pale candle-flame beside the light of Wordsworth.

Here is the letter addressed by the poet to his fellow-poet Samuel Rogers, who dealt in figures of finance as well as of speech, and who wrote upon it, "Not to be printed, S. R."

You, my dear Rogers, are placed by fortune above the necessity of considering your books with reference to pecuniary profit now or hereafter. It is not so with most of your literary and personal friends, myself among the number, and therefore I take leave to mention that the 2nd. reading of Sergeant Talfourd's copyright bill stands for Wednesday, the 11th of April. Let me urge you to give it your support among your Parliamentary friends of all parties, as it is not

a party measure. Brooke's is at hand, and you are every day and every hour seeing some influential person. Need I say more? for you have probably heard that the rapacity of the booksellers is putting them, under pretence of public good, upon what threatens to be a very strong opposition. They will be backed by the Doctrinaires (called so, I suppose, in the spirit of the trite phrase *lucus a non lucendo*). As the attendance is usually very thin upon a Wednesday, the Sergeant tells me that it is desirable that the favourers of his motion should be in the house to prevent its being voted out.

What said Gabriel Jones?

AUGUSTA COUNTY.

DR. SIR,—My son may probably stay in camp longer than his present stock of cash may hold out. I therefore have taken the freedom of drawing on you for yr. amount of the enclosed account: he has yr. original order of acceptance; and his receipt will be sufficient. I have nothing to add but to wish you an agreeable and successful campaine. Yr. most obt. servant,

April 28, '77. GABRIEL JONES.

Both of these letters deal with the important money question, but no one can dispute the fact that the author is more interesting than the legislator. Few enlightened citizens of this or any land can really care much about Jones. He belongs, with Simon Boerum, to the category of expensive luxuries. The lamb

was shorn because some other lamb had a vacancy in his "set," and the first lamb was playing the game without a limit.

These considerations naturally lead us to the inquiry, as an eminent contemporary statesman might say, whether or not the literary magnate really feels sad and weary when some one begs him for his autograph. He is wont to lament much about the hardship of it, and to express himself after the manner of Edwin Forrest, reference to which has been hereinbefore made, to borrow the jargon of the attorney. While it is true that the serious and genuine collector does not write for an autograph to any one with whom he is not personally acquainted, yet I am not sure that the great man is displeased with the implied compliment, however loudly he may complain of the trespass. It was a profound remark of Josh Billings—or perhaps of that ancient and now almost forgotten humorist Jack Downing—that "there is a great deal of human natur' in mankind in gin'ral." The distinguished author is not altogether outside of the pale of ordinary humanity. Still, autograph letters written to order are, in my humble judgment, seldom worth having.

There is, to my knowledge, one exception to the rule, and that is a letter of the deft master of style, the accomplished wizard of words,

Robert Louis Stevenson. It has been printed before, in an article written, as I recall it, for the *Cosmopolitan,* but it will bear repetition:

VAILIMA, UPOLU, SAMOA.

You have sent me a slip to write on: you have sent me an addressed envelope: you have sent it me stamped: many have done as much before. You have spelled my name right, and some have done that. In one point you stand alone: you have sent me the stamps for my post-office, not the stamps for yours. What is asked with so much consideration, I take a pleasure to grant. Here, since you value it, and have been at the pains to earn it by such unusual attentions—here is the signature of

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

For the one civil autograph collector, Charles R———.

I will pass by without comment the base insinuation that Mr. R——— is the only civil autograph collector in the universe. I am sure I never asked Stevenson for his autograph, but if I had broken my rule and done so, I think I should have known how to be civil about it. I disapprove of the begging habit. It throws a shadow of the ridiculous over a very serious and dignified occupation.

Perhaps my Lincoln autograph may be another exception. It is dated at the Executive Mansion, Washington, December 11, 1862:

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

R. SHELTON MACKENZIE,—Below is my autograph for your good lady as you request.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

Ben: Perley Poore — he of the colon — says in his chapter in Allen Thorndike Rice's *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln:*

When Dr. R. Shelton Mackenzie, of Philadelphia, called at the White House and asked for the President's autograph, Mr. Lincoln said:

"Will you have it on a card or on a sheet of paper?"

"If the choice rested with myself," said the jovial doctor, "I should prefer it at the foot of a commission."

Mr. Lincoln smiled and shook his head as if he did not see it in that light, but he sat down and wrote a few pleasant lines, adding his legible signature, "A. Lincoln."

It will be observed that Mr. Lincoln did not laugh at the doctor's alleged joke, whose venerable age certainly entitled it to dignified respect; he merely smiled. It will also be noted that the doctor's desire for the President's autograph was basely, and no doubt falsely, imputed to "his good lady." The device was a shallow one, but it is one of the stock devices of the autograph hunter, like the innocent letter which seeks to know in what year the novelist published that popular story, or where a letter

88 St. James's St.
Monday

My dear Ainsworth.

Will you give me your name
at the G for Thursday at 6,
and come and dine with me Thurs.d.
I want to ask 3 or 4 of the
literary persuasion to chuse
Ainsworth to M.D.

to Mr. Blank, the novelist's intimate friend, will be likely to reach him.

I will wander back to the literary alcove. Surely no one can fail to feel closer to Thackeray when he has held in his hand and read such a pleasant little note as this:

MY DEAR AINSWORTH,—Will you give me your name at the G. for Tuesday at 6, and come and dine with me there? I want to ask 3 or 4 of the littery purfession. Yrs. always,

W. M. T.

It was written in 1844 from 88 St. James Street, where he wrote *Barry Lyndon*. Mr. Rideing says (1885) that the building has been demolished,[1] but Mr. Crowe (1897) asserts that it still "stands secure enough."[2] After his usual playful fashion, Thackeray has written another notelet on the flap of the envelope:

MY DEAR AINSWORTH,—I would have come with the greatest pleasure but Gwilt has engaged me. How are you and the ladies and the young daughter? I will come out one very early day to shake you by the hand. Yours,

W. M. T.

The most hardened of scoffers must confess that there is some justification for the pursuit,

[1] Thackeray's *London*, p. 76. [2] *Haunts and Homes*, p. 45.

when one may possess a letter from Laurence Sterne to David Garrick. In *The Historical Gallery,* by Robert Huish, published in 1830, it is said: "In 1762 he [Sterne] resolved himself to visit France, and it was this project which gave rise to the *Sentimental Journey.* His finances, however, at this juncture were so low that previously to his departure he wrote to Mr. Garrick to advance him £20."

The original letter, which came from Upcott, and is, therefore, undeniably genuine, lies before me. Sterne says:

> DEAR GARRICK,—Upon reviewing my finances this morning, with some unforseen expenses, I find I should set out with £20 less than a prudent man ought. Will you lend me twenty pounds?
>
> Yrs.,
>
> L. STERNE.

The spelling is Sterne's, not mine.

We may assume that this rather graceful application was successful, for Sterne went to France and the *Sentimental Journey* was written.

Are there many people in these days who read the book? I have my doubts on the subject. It is easy for the smatterer to refer lightly to *Tristam Shandy* and to the *Journey,* but I have noticed that he remembers little of them except the most familiar quotations. Like

LAURENCE STERNE, A.M. &c.

Dear Garrick.

Upon reviewing my finances this morning, w^th some unforseen expences — I find I should set out with 20 p^ds less — than a prudent man ought — will You lend me twenty pounds.

Y^rs L. Sterne

Boswell's *Johnson*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Don Quixote*, they belong to the immortal library which all men are believed to know by heart, but which no one ever reads entirely through. I am confident, however, that I might contrive to plough through Boswell if it were not for the notes of his editors. I abhor notes. They distract my attention and confuse my mind. Blessed is the editor who wisely refrains from scattering them along the pages and considerately masses them in an appendix.

Those of us who retain a lively recollection of the late nineteenth century will remember the plain little woman who puzzled the critics, and who called herself "Currer Bell." Even to-day we read *Jane Eyre*, but I do not think that the other stories are often taken down from the shelves. Every one knows how, in early girlhood, Charlotte Brontë was accustomed to write elaborate romances, chiefly about the Duke of Wellington, or some member of his family, real or imaginary, for Charlotte blindly adored the hero of Waterloo. Some of these sketches have been preserved, and here is one entitled *Lord Douro*. It bears the date of July 21, 1837, and is signed by "C. Brontë." It has been lovingly protected by a Zaehnsdorf levant binding, and it consists of some twenty-eight pages, note size, all in that tiny,

microscopic hand, compared to which Thackeray's minute chirography and De Quincey's small characters are Brobdingnagian. I defy any one to decipher it without the aid of a magnifying-glass.

The little romance, it must be acknowledged, is rather dreary, and does not seem to be of any great interest as a composition, even when seen through a magnifying-glass. It betrays no bright promise of future fame. A firm of New York publishers once asked permission to print it, but out of consideration for the Brontës the owner decided that it had better remain in the seclusion of his library.

An extract will suffice:

Night after night closed around the villa grounds, warm, pure and balmy, with the harvest moon beaming upon its Grecian front, and looking through its casements into some rich chambers, where the Marchioness sat leaning upon her Lord's breast, and forgetting in his arms every warning of death, every thought of sadness she had ever known. If, for a moment, some symptom of her disease appeared shadows[1] the first sound of Douro's voice, the first glance of his dark eye scattered them utterly—he was to her, I say, as kind, as gentle, as impassioned as imagination can conceive. Those six weeks were to Marian a heavenly dream. The sound of the Trumpet broke it. War

[1] This portion is quite illegible.

came driven over Africa in wild gales of rain and sleet. The sunshine of summer and the torch of peace were quenched together. Douro joined his regiment, and we all know what succeeded. We all remember the rains and the mutinies, the defeats and the victories of the Augrian (?) campaign. Scarcely was winter over, scarcely was the noise of battle hushed, when the bell from St. Michael's, tolling long and slow, revealed the fate of FLORENCE MARIAN WELLESLEY, MARCHIONESS OF DOURO.

Here endeth the story, but there is a six-stanza poem appended. Miss Brontë, like Silas Wegg, drops into poetry at intervals throughout the whole screed. There are some words which defy the power of the glass, and I have given up trying to guess what they are. I suppose that the poor girl was compelled to be economical about so trifling a matter as paper, and that she cramped her hand-writing in order to compress as much upon a page as it could contain. It is pitiful to think of genius restricted by such ignoble fetters.

By the side of *Lord Douro* lies a small volume of Charlotte Brontë's manuscript poems, signed at the end, "C. Brontë Jan'y 19, 1836." There are twenty pages in all, four in pencil. None of them have been published, to the best of my belief. They are rather an improvement on the history of the unfortunate lady

with the imposing title. One of them is called "The Wounded Stag":

Passing amid the deepest shade
Of the wood's sombre heart,
Last night I saw a wounded deer
Laid lonely and apart.

Pain trembles in his weary limbs
Pain fills his patient eye,
Pain-crushed amid the shadowy fern
His branchy crown did lie.

Another poem contains this stanza, which, after infinite pains, I have deciphered:

Glorious hills from the golden frames
Bend with a dreamlike smile
Parting with snowy hand the gleams
Of their lustrous hair the while.
The teeth of pearl, through the lips of rose
Archly but stilly shew
Nothing that coral mouth can close
Which has smiled through centuries so.
Glimpses of English scenery
Northumbrian hills and halls
And glorious plains of Italy
Shine on the magic walls.

But the task of translating the hieroglyphics is too great for ordinary eyes, and I give up the

Florence Marian Wellesley Marchioness of Dou

labor. Perhaps some Champollion of literature may be willing to undertake the elucidation of these mysteries.

It is a matter of regret to me that I have never had the opportunity to study the personal habits and customs of the poet or the author. I know only two poets, both of them charming men, and yet I cannot say that I know much about their methods of work. One of them is always most cheerful and entertaining at dinner, but he is apt to be morose at breakfast. This suggests a field of investigation. The subject has not been very carefully considered. We read a great deal of the behavior of our literary heroes at the dinner-table, but I do not recall any authentic accounts of their conduct at the early morning meal, except, perhaps, the chronicles of a certain Poet at the Breakfast Table, and of an Autocrat and a Professor, all of which I believe to be entirely fictitious. By-the-way, I see that a "First Edition" of the *Autocrat* sold not long ago for the sum of $35, the copy being embellished with a verse or stanza of the "Chambered Nautilus" in the author's handwriting. When I think how often Dr. Holmes wrote out copies of verses from that poem and from "Old Ironsides," I can fancy that the dear old gentleman

must have become as tired of them as General Sherman was of "Marching through Georgia."

To my mind, that autograph verse was worth considerably more than the "First Edition."

First editions are very much honored and esteemed, I must admit. I do not intend to plunge into any debate over them or to provoke any controversy concerning them. If any one wishes to know, why first editions? let him read Arnold's *First Report of a Book Collector*, and then examine the handsome catalogue of Mr. Arnold's sale in February, 1901, with prices inserted. But why first editions of Kipling and of Stevenson? I was mightily amused recently to learn that the deluded beings who paid appalling prices for early India and Davos Platz items were finding themselves fearfully long of the market and liable to be sold out under the rule. A decline in *School-boy Lyrics* from £135 to 65*s.* exhibits a fall altogether more disastrous than any autograph calamity. I have a bookish friend who actually prides himself on the possession of a complete set of first editions of Anthony Trollope! It cost him a good deal of time and toil, and I know not how many golden shekels. But why not E. P. Roe, or

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

T. S. Arthur, or William Gilmore Simms? I should as soon think of accumulating first editions of the *Congressional Record.*

This person has laughed at my autographs.

VI

I WAS mistaken when I said that I had known only two poets; I recall that there are four who have had the privilege of my acquaintance. One of them I well remember as a freshman in college when I was strutting about as a supercilious senior. Now he is a man of note, and I am pleased if I am allowed to sit near him at dinner and to listen to his graceful post-prandial eloquence. I pride myself on the discovery that we had a common ancestor, who met a soldier's death on the field of Monmouth. Until I contrived to get upon the trail of this glorious great-grandfather, I had never heard of any of my forebears as Revolutionary patriots, and I had labored under the painful conviction that they were all unmitigated Tories. This brave captain of Somerset County militia has redeemed the family reputation, and I should dearly love to have his autograph. But I am getting too far away from my poet, who will, perhaps, excuse me for giving forth an extract from a letter of his which I greatly prize:

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

When a poem, or a story, or a bit of an essay comes to a man, he does not wait for a pen, a fair sheet of paper, and some black ink, before he begins to write. No, he uses an old lead-pencil and any kind of paper that comes to hand, even the back of an envelope, and so he sets his thoughts down in a script that makes the printer profane. The [blank] for example. I had despaired of writing anything but a perfunctory performance, and had firmly resolved not to do that. . . . Suddenly the idea of the poem visited me on a lonely journey, and the outline of it was sketched in a ragged little memorandum book. It was worked out in a solitary cave on the *Île Maligne*, amid the roaring waters of the *Grande Décharge*.

I am sorry that I cannot tell the name of the noble poem whose genesis is thus described, but I may not break the seal of confidence.

The other poet won a certain popularity during the war of the Rebellion, and his autograph is in the portfolio of "American Military" —Charles G. Halpine, more famous as "Miles O'Reilly." There cannot be many now who have any distinct recollection of him. He belongs to an evanescent, transitory order. Reputations like his grow rapidly and disappear as quickly. He was an accomplished journalist, and I used to see him, when he was a colonel on the staff of the general commanding the Department of the East, scribbling fast and fu-

riously at his desk, composing some brilliant letter from a foreign land, which he would transmit directly from Bleecker Street to his newspaper in Park Row. I recall only one verse of his, which is perhaps not very remarkable for wit, melody, or poetic quality, but it affords a singular instance of the tenacity with which the human mind will hold fast to a trifle for wellnigh forty years, while letting go of so many things of real value:

Long life to ye, Mr. Lincoln,
  May ye live both free and aisy,
And when ye die, with the top of each toe
  Turned up to the roots of a daisy,
May this be your epitaph, nately writ,
  "Though thraitors abused him vilely,
  He was honest, and kindly, and loved
    a joke,—
  And he pardoned Miles O'Reilly."

From Halpine's Irishman the mind strays very naturally to a Scotchman. One of my best friends has a pet aversion: he can never bring himself to the point of liking Robert Burns. Perhaps the French strain in his blood makes him unappreciative of Scottish poetry or Scottish thoughts. He will not admit that Burns was an interesting character, although I argue with him that when so many love and admire the works of Burns there must be some

Madam,

I have here
epistolary performances
the smallest degree, in r
-tude, which, while life's u
"breast" shall ever glow to
I might have altered o
letters; perhaps I ough
wished to show you the
their native colors. —

I h
with the

M
you

Edin. 20th March
1787

int you a share of my
happy at having it in
my power to show that grati-
tem spirit beats within my
the family of Glencairn. —
omitted something in these
to have done so; but
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most heart-warm, grateful sincerity,
dam,
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Robt. Burns

NOT

quality in them which deserves admiration. But he persists in saying, as Baron Martin is reported to have said of Shakespeare, "From what I have seen of him, I think him a very overrated mon." When, however, I show him my Burns letter, he is obliged to confess that he wrote a good hand! It is a letter to Lady Henrietta Don:

MADAM,—I have here sent you a parcel of my epistolary performances; happy at having it, in the smallest degree, in my power to show that gratitude, which, while life's warm spirit beats within my breast, shall ever glow to the family of Glencairn. I might have altered or omitted some things in these letters; perhaps I ought to have done so; but I wish to show you the Bard and his style in their native colors.

I have the honor to be with the most heart-warm, grateful sincerity, Madam, your much indebted and very humble servant.

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINB., *26th March*, 1787.

There is something about the elaborate subscription which is deliciously suggestive of our old friend, Mr. Wilkins Micawber.

One cannot help feeling a great deal of interest in whatever relates to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, although his philosophy is practically forgotten, and his poetry, if we except

the *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, has gone into the store-houses of antiquity. But it was good poetry, and I have always had a conviction, which I have carefully concealed in the recesses of my inner being, that he was far greater than some of his contemporaries whose fame has endured more permanently. Probably the reader of to-day regards all these last-century *litterati* as very old-fashioned indeed, and has relegated them to the obscurity of the back shelves. It must, however, be permitted to the aged to hint mildly at the possibility that the first half of the nineteenth century was far more productive of genuine poetry than the latter half. Here is a Coleridge manuscript with its quaint title:

SONG, OR RATHER A COMMENCEMENT OF A SONG.[1]

A sunny shaft did I behold—
From sky to earth it slanted,
And pois'd therein a Bird so bold—
Sweet Bird! thou wert enchanted!
He rose, he sunk, he rustled, he troll'd
Within that shaft of sunny mist,
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold.
All else of Amethyst!

[1] This appears in his published works as "Song, by Glycine," with some slight changes, *e. g.*, "twinkled thus," instead of "then," in the ninth line, and "Far, far away," instead of "Away! Away!" in the sixteenth line.

And then he sang: Adieu! Adieu!
Love's dreams prove seldom true.

The Blossoms—they
Make no delay,
The sparkling dew-drops will not stay!
Sweet month of May,
We must away,
Away! Away!
To-day! To-day!

This is not at all lofty or convincing, and one must own that it sounds very like the translations of the opera librettos. There is not much worse nonsense than these translations, and Coleridge, who probably never read one, has fallen into the style without any malice aforethought.

This little thing of his son Hartley is not much better, "On the singing of Mrs. D—— W——":

Like a blithe birdy in a danksome isle
Of changeless beauty, 'mid a spacious wood.
Such was the song, and such the pensive smile.
Robed in the weeds of early widowhood,
And yet, not so—for Birdy has a nest,
And sings of hopes and joys that soon are coming
When every bush is in its vernal best
And all her callow brood are sunk in rest, etc.

Hartley Coleridge did not write as plainly as did his illustrious sire. His autograph in-

always believe that if Lord and Lady Byron could have been left to themselves, without the interference which outsiders so often seem resolved to inflict upon friends and relatives, there would never have been any serious trouble between them. The noble art of minding one's own business is not cultivated as generally as it should be. Byron was not a saint, and few men of letters were saints in those days; but a little tact and wisdom could, I think, have preserved harmony between him and his wife.

Consider Thomas Carlyle and his spouse. Was there ever a couple who dwelt more completely in what a friend of mine calls "ferocious gloom"? Their feuds and quarrels were bitter and continuous. Very likely the sympathies of the greater number are with the woman, and it is true that the man must have been intensely irritating. Still, I have not the least doubt that Jane worried Thomas sorely, and that, if he had departed this life before her demise, she in her widowhood might have placed herself upon the stool of repentance as remorsefully as he did. Perhaps, after all, their domestic ills and bickerings were no worse than those which come to others living under like conditions, and their woes have become famous merely because they talked so much about them

and others have written so much about them. Let the judicious man pray to be delivered from his biographer—or sometimes from his autobiographer—*videlicet* poor McClellan and his "Own Story."

I like to read my Jane Carlyle letter, for it betrays such a characteristic confidence in her charms, naïvely expressed:

CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA, *Tuesday.*

DEAR SIR,—I should tell you that Mr. Carlyle is highly pleased with these photographs of me —declares them the only likenesses of me he has ever seen; tho' I have been drawn, and painted, and photographed times without number! He likes them *all*, but the profile one the best, and the full-face one the least. I hope you will find some way of making people know that the three photographs of Mr. C. which he selected are the ones of all that have been done of him, he himself thinks the likest. It would be a pity that those wretched looking things of Jeffrey's should go on being circulated when people can have so much better likenesses for their money.

Yours truly,

JANE W. CARLYLE.

While her letters are usually bright and interesting, it is otherwise with Carlyle's. I find his epistolary effusions—at least those which have come under my eyes—passably dull. His dyspeptic genius does not belong

Horace Walpole, and Lord Hervey disliked him, and their power and influence as critics and memoir-writers have been effective to establish their view of him as the true one, irrespective of the actual truth.

If I were a great man, prince, poet, or statesman, I think I would take measures during my lifetime to secure my memory against a perpetuation in the form of a "Life" written by a near relative or by an "intimate friend." I am thinking at the moment of Forster's *Dickens* and Hallam Tennyson's biography of his father. Collingwood's *Lewis Carroll* is in the same general class. Perhaps it was necessary that the official *Life of Tennyson* should be a cold and stately memorial, but I cannot forgive Forster for making my Dickens such an ordinary, every-day cad, or Collingwood for taking all the charm out of the creator of the immortal Alice. Of course, few will agree with me in my judgment, but that does not change my mind one whit. They will point me to Trevelyan's *Macaulay* and to Lockhart's *Scott;* but then these are only shining exceptions.

Thinking of Hallam Tennyson's life of his father leads me to take it from the shelf and look over my Tennysoniana. I like this letter for its reference to one of my other idols:

Farringford,
Freshwater,
Isle of Wight.

March 3/68

Dear Sir,

I had some doubt as to whether I ought to accept your last cheque, but I do so, taking it for granted that you will look upon me as an Olivier Twist 'asking for more'

Yours very truly
Tennyson

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,
ISLE OF WIGHT, *Jany.* 3, 68.

DEAR SIR,—I had some doubt as to whether I ought to accept your last cheque, but I do so, taking it for granted that you will not look upon me as an Oliver Twist, "asking for more."

Yours very truly,
A. TENNYSON.

This reluctant receipt of a "cheque" is pleasantly amusing to us ordinary mortals, who find ourselves invariably taking the money whether we think that we have earned it or not. Could it have been that the noble laureate was imitating a certain Marchioness we all know and "making believe" a good deal?

Another letter nestles between the fly-leaves of volume I.:

FARRINGFORD, *April 22nd*, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—You can publish the words with your music, if you will. All these songs have been set before more than once; perhaps you are not aware of this.

Yours truly,
A. TENNYSON.

2 songs from the Miller's Daughter.
Break, break, break.
(The Poet's Song.)

ARTHUR SEWELL, ESQ.

I do not know why it is that Tennyson's beautiful lyrics have never been adequately fitted with a musical setting. There was a

certain Graham who arranged a melody for "Tears, Idle Tears," which is a recollection of my boyhood, and which used to seem to my uncultivated ear a fascinating composition. At this day, I scarcely feel competent to judge whether it was really deserving. What we loved in our callow years of school and college is apt to be sacred in our senescent memories, and we may not trust ourselves to be judicious or critical about it. I should not care to have the beauty of that song, as it lingers in my antiquated recollections, dimmed by the harsh analysis of the musical expert. I suppose that our composers hesitate to marry their work to such splendid lines as those of the grand master of English verse. It is a pity.

Mrs. Tennyson writes:

> Mr. Tennyson has had no power over his poems, but he has communicated your wish to Mr. Strahan. We are glad to hear that you are hopeful about your work.

That was a nice, kindly, cheering sort of assurance to the poor fellow who received it. I am sure I do not know who he was. What he wanted to do with the poems over which Tennyson had no power is utterly incomprehensible to me; but if he did not take new heart in doing his "work," whatever it may have been,

after Mrs. Tennyson had assured him that she was glad that he was hopeful about it, he certainly exhibited gross ingratitude.

I wish that I could read Hallam Tennyson's letter. I have observed that sons of great men not only fall below their fathers in mental capacity, but sink infinitely beneath them in the matter of plain, sensible, and intelligible handwriting. As near as I can tell, he says:

> I do not know whether my father will be induced to recite "The Charge" again for you, for he is much surprised at your proposing to advertise him and his poem in the way you describe in your telegram.

This seems to refer to a delivery by Tennyson of "The Charge of the Light Brigade" on some occasion. It was of this famous and strenuous poem that the author said: "It is not a poem on which I pique myself"; but it is one of the tickets which entitle him to a seat in the theatre of immortals. It is the old story over again of the slighted offspring of genius who wins the hearts of the multitude, while the spoiled and ineffective child is coddled by the doting parent. I am not going to cite Milton with his preference for *Paradise Regained,* nor Thackeray, nor Dickens. Macaulay's schoolboy knows all that by heart.

VII

MY friends are inclined to view with disfavor my inoffensive expressions regarding poets, philosophers, and people in general, and I am growing timid about saying anything frankly. Men usually do not say what they really think, but what they believe other men expect them to think. My most revered critic, the golf expert, tells me that I am only a rag-gatherer, an accumulator of scraps of paper with pen-scratches upon them, a preserver of things which the perpetrator would have destroyed if he had dreamed that they would be saved and hoarded; in short, a mere *chiffonnier*. He intimates that a beetle of an autograph collector should not presume to make any remarks about the merits or the shortcomings of the famous. "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*," he says, sardonically, as if he were originating a smart speech. There is nothing like a good old classical hit to humble me to the dust, even if it be carefully chosen out of Bohn's *Dictionary of Quotations*, a most useful storehouse, al-

though I recall the fact that General Dix, who never wasted time, used to devote the half-hour between dressing and breakfast to verifying Bohn's classical volume, and found enough errors to fill a small book. I have learned the lesson that one should never accept a quotation second-hand. He who trusteth to the compilation-book shall be undone.

In view of the unfavorable judgment of my acquaintances, I must endeavor to be careful and circumspect in my comments, and I shall not venture to give my impressions of Froude's *History* or of his canonization of Henry VIII., or of his melancholy chronicle of the clapper-clawing of the Carlyles. Let no one object to that word, for it is legitimate:

> Now are they clapper-clawing one another; I'll go look on. That dissembling varlet, Diomed, has got that same scurvy, doting, foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm.[1]

I shall let Mr. Froude speak for himself in his own Froudish way:

> DEAR SIR,—Mr. Weller's friend (or perhaps Mr. Weller himself) would say that "autographs is vanity!"—but since you wish for mine,
>
> I subscribe myself
> faithfully yours,
> J. A. FROUDE.

[1] *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 4.

Whether Mr. Weller or his friend would have known an autograph when they saw it, or what they would have said on contemplating one, I cannot confidently conjecture. Whether Mr. Froude meant that "autographs is vanity" from the point of view of the writer or from that of the owner, I know not. I question the truth of the remark in either sense, unless it be in the light of the saying of the preacher, "All is vanity." Mr. Froude did his act rather prettily and turned off a "request" autograph with a neatness which deserves admiration, despite the impertinent fling at my tribe, which I can afford to treat with a lofty disdain. I am willing to admit that from a purely utilitarian "stand-point"—the word is objectionable but convenient—the autograph letter of William Shakespeare is worth no more than the letter of the most insignificant of mortals. And yet many intelligent people would, without doubt, prefer Shakespeare's autograph to mine. We need not pause to inquire why it should be so, nor is it worth while to expend energy in combating the proposition that "autographs is vanity." Let us avoid such disputes, and let us not dignify the detractors of our pet pursuit by condescending to argue with them. Rather let us return to paths of pleasantness and peace, and pore over the portfolios.

I prefer Mr. Kipling's method of producing a conventional autograph to that which Mr. Froude adopted. The letter is clear, direct, and wholly unobjectionable, although it might have been more diffuse in style:

101 EARLS' COURT ROAD,
Ap. 27.

To the Editor "Once A Week":

DEAR SIR,—I trust that the following will meet your views of an autograph.

Sincerely,
RUDYARD KIPLING.

This has a flavor of good nature; there is no condescension about it; and the writer is not guilty of the affectation of weary submission to the demands of a tyrannical bore.

Whether or not we approve of the practice of grouping together in a single volume a number of autograph letters, we must own that it is not unwise to enrich a book by the addition of one letter, or at least a line or two and a signature of the author. It confers a distinction, and adds to the value—I mean the sentimental value and not the pecuniary value, which is never to be thought of by the sincere lover of the book or the autograph, except when he is pondering on how to save enough money to add just a few more treasures to his hoard. That copy

of Christina Rossetti's *Commonplace* has an outward appearance well suited to its title, and some former owner has defaced it, after a never-to-be-sufficiently-condemned fashion, by causing to be affixed to it, paste-fastened, sundry extracts from newspapers, technically known as "cuttings," and a cheap portrait from some periodical; but it acquires an individuality from the little note attached to a fly-leaf:

4 COPT HALL PLACE,
FOLKESTONE, *Saturday morning.*

Miss C. Rossetti presents her compliments to Mrs. G. Linnæus Banks, and thanks her for her welcome offer of reviewing *Commonplace*. She will communicate with Mr. Ellis, in whose hands the copies are, on the subject.

The *Poems* of Longfellow are none the less attractive for the four lines of "Excelsior," in the familiar hand of the poet, the letters sloping gracefully to the left, dated in September, 1852; nor for the odd manuscript inserted in the volume of *Evangeline*, which, although not of Longfellow's writing, has a certain relevancy, for it is a yellow, faded document, a receipted bill for £168 15*s.*, beginning, "The Publick—to the Watch—Dr.," and endorsed "Ac^{t}. of John Beldon & the men under his command for guarding the Acadians, 16 March, 1756."

The *Kavanagh*, too, is by no means spoiled

for the owner by this letter, written shortly after the publication of the tale and just before the appearance of *The Seaside and the Fireside* containing the poem known of all declaimers, "The Building of the Ship," which long years afterwards some municipal wiseacres in Brooklyn condemned as unsuited to schools because of its alleged indecency, a quality which existed only in their Bœotian brains:

CAMBRIDGE, *May* 19, 1849.

DEAR SIR,—I cannot follow out your suggestions in regard to *Kavanagh*, as it is already published here; but in future will not forget them, if you think it worth while to take any steps about a copyright. The poems I propose to publish in the autumn will make a volume about as large as the original edition of the *Voices of the Night* —say from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pages of the size of *Kavanagh*, making an addition of about one-fifth of all, as they now stand. I think it would hardly be worth while to add anything to your edition until you can add all. You have printed from the Philadelphia copy. Would you not prefer the Cambridge, in which the successive volumes have been added one to the other, without change or rearrangement? May I trouble you to forward this volume to Mr. Gilfillan.

Yours truly,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

As a rule, the lawyers are not as interesting in letters as they ought to be, considering their

calling and their opportunities for observation. Perhaps they have taken to heart the words of Bacon—"It is generally better to deal by Speech than by Letter: Letters are good, when a Man would draw an answer by Letter back again; or when it may serve, for a Man's Justification, afterwards, to produce his own Letter; or where it may be Danger to be interrupted, or heard by Pieces." Nevertheless they occasionally intrust their unprofessional thoughts to paper, and some of them have made important contributions to literature. Sir Walter Scott says that "a lawyer without history or literature is a mechanic, a mere working mason; if he possesses some knowledge of these, he may venture to call himself an architect." But the saying that the law is a jealous mistress is a truism; and few men may achieve success at the bar and distinction in authorship. I know of one, whose life has surely been enviable, and who has "all that which should accompany old age, as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends"; with a mind so alert and vigorous that he refuses to give an affirmative answer to his own query:

> Is that oft-uttered adage true—
> "The Old is better than the New"—
> Old ways, old wines, old friends, old books,
> The ancient haunts, the time-worn nooks,

With Memory's twilight overcast,
Where visions of a vanished Past
Bring back, in all its mellow glow,
The Golden Age of long ago?

The men of the law remember, no doubt, the great controversy which arose over the Courvoisier case and the interminable debate which was carried on for some years upon the question whether a lawyer may honorably defend a client whom he knows to be guilty of the offence charged. Many reams of paper were wasted in the effort, on the one hand, to prove that a prisoner who has confessed his crime to his advocate is not entitled to the aid of that advocate, and on the other to demonstrate the right of every accused person to the services of counsel at his trial, irrespective of his actual guilt or innocence. Charles Phillips, barrister-at-law, eloquent, able, and florid, nicknamed "Counsellor O'Garnish," was a man of excellent reputation at the bar. I believe he was the author of that highly ornamented oration on Napoleon which we used to declaim at school, and in which the emperor is described as "grand, gloomy, and peculiar." Courvoisier was a valet, charged with the murder of his employer, Lord William Russell. During the trial he disclosed his guilt to Phillips, who nevertheless summed up for the defence. It was said that the advocate

went beyond the limits of propriety by pledging his word to the jury that his client was innocent. It was a perversion of what Phillips really said, and every one knows now that the lawyer only did his duty, but there was a time when it was unpopular to take his part. Samuel Warren, also a barrister, and the author of "Ten Thousand a Year," had his imperfections; he was often the object of ridicule; he was the theme of many a jest; but he was stanch and true to his brother of the bar, and I like him for his letter. He says:

35 WOBURN PLACE, R. S.
3d January, 1850.

MY DEAR PHILLIPS,—I feel it due to you to state that I have, on this day, *for the first time*, perused, *and that with the greatest attention*, the *Times'* report of Courvoisier's trial — especially the opening address of the late Mr. Adolphus, your speech, and the late C. J. Tindal's summing up. I have risen from the perusal of these matters with a lively feeling of indignation towards your unprincipled and malignant calumniators & of admiration of your conscientious & guarded eloquence on behalf of the blood-stained miscreant whom it had become *your hard duty* to defend. Your defamers are guilty equally of *suppressio veri et allegatio falsi*. My blood *boils* when I think of the treatment you have received. I doubt whether there was, or is, another man living who could have acquitted himself with such exquisite judgment in a case of such exquisite and appalling

difficulty. Of Mr. Adolphus' opening I dare not trust myself with speaking, he being dead. I who write all this am a man who never commits himself lightly to black & white, being penetrated with a sense of the truth that *litera scripta manet*, but I am convinced in my innermost soul that you are as highly honourable, as you have long been a foully wronged man.

I am ever, your attached & faithful friend,

SAMUEL WARREN.

It was of Warren, who was fond of consorting with the nobility, that the story is told about a bragging remark to the effect that when he dined at a certain duke's there was no soup. "I suppose they had eaten it all up-stairs," said Jerrold. Probably the anecdote dates back to the Crusades, but we must contrive somehow to keep up the reputation of noted wits. I have learned that when I say a really good thing, nobody seems to pay any attention to it; but if I preface my jest with the pardonable falsehoods, "Sheridan one day," or "Mark Twain not long ago," the applause is deafening. I do not mean to apply for a patent on this new and useful improvement, for Burnand, the "Happy-Thought" man, pre-empted the discovery. You would not have known it if I had not told you, but, as I am not a Molière, I cannot afford to be detected in taking my own property wherever I may find it.

My thoughts revert to Froude and his sneer. I pretend that I do not resent these slights, but I feel them. I want an antidote, and it is in the upper drawer of the old mahogany cabinet which stands near the north window. It is the kindly autograph of the admirable man who toiled through life burdened with the name of "Marie Jean Paul Joseph Roche Yves Gilbert du Motier," Marquis de Lafayette. My eloquent friend, the Georgia judge, said of him that he was "a man more illustrious than Nathanael Greene and only less distinguished than Washington himself; a major-general in our army before he was twenty; commander of the National Guard of France when he was thirty-two; whose notoriety was enlarged if his greatness was not enhanced, for being called a 'noodle' by the mightiest captain and conqueror since Julius Cæsar."

It is an old and faded portrait, signed "Lafayette," and it was given to some one in Charleston, South Carolina, *circa* 1824; an heirloom which a pathetic poverty put upon the market; and I hold it reverently and affectionately because of its history as well as for its intrinsic merit. Under the portrait, Lafayette wrote:

> I am much obliged to you, my dear sir, for the kind request, and have the honor to return the portrait with the name of your grateful friend,
>
> LAFAYETTE.

They do these things well in France; and I rejoice that the good friend of ours who generously devoted himself to our cause in the Revolution was not only a soldier and a patriot, but a gracious gentleman.

True to my principle that there shall be nothing consecutive in these meditations, I ramble back from Lafayette to lawyers. After Sir William Blackstone, that overrated person who earned immortality far too easily, Lord Mansfield is probably the most eminent occupant of a seat in the legal Walhalla. I believe that he is the original inventor of the maxim, "No case, abuse plaintiff's attorney," and of the advice to the colonial judge never to give any reasons for his decisions. Macaulay called him the father of modern Toryism. His letter exhibits the fondness of the men of his day for capital letters:

KENWOOD, 18 *Sept.* 1763.

MY DEAR SR, — The Archbishop of Canterbury might easily judge & so must ev'ry Body, that it is impossible for me not to be for Ld Rockingham, upon such a point if He is set up but I don't recollect ever saying a Syllable to his Grace upon the Subject unless something dropped the Day Ld Egremont was chose, in his Grace's Hearing. There was a Talk of setting Ld Rockingham up then, but waved, because upon the choice of the Bp. of London, most of the Governors had

engaged Ld Egremont should be the next. I then said, but I don't recollect the A B's could hear me, that I must be for Lord R. As for your being set up next I could have no Imagination of it then, & till I recd yr letter this moment I never heard of it. As to the Rule that it is always usual to name one of the King's Ministers to supply the vacancy, I am persuaded it is not so. When Ld Gower was chose, I believe it was not on account of his office. When I was chose, neither the Chancr, Secretary of State, or Privy Seal were Governors. After Ld Talbot was Chancr the D. of Grafton was chose many of the Govrs. engaged to chose me next. The matter is not entire with me. If I had said nothing, it is impossible for me not to be for Lord R. upon a personal matter of this kind but I have sd it ever since Ld Egremont was chose. If I was capable of doing otherwise, I am sure you would advise me against it. There is no man in England I would be sorrier not to gratify upon ev'ry occasion than yrself. I have had a long Acquaintance & Friendship with you, which enables me to do Justice to yr *Worth*. Against ev'ry other Man I am ready to give this mark I am ready to engage for the next, which cannot be far off, but nobody will in my eye think it the least disrespect to you that I keep my Engagement to my nephew whose guardian I was with whom and whose Family I live constantly, & who has in no degree broke private Friendship with me tho we see some Points in quite opposite lights.

If Sir William Scott, Lord Stowell, the brother of Lord Eldon, was not the greatest of lawyers,

he may be called the grandfather of admiralty jurisprudence. Short of stature, fair-haired, corpulent in later years, slovenly in dress, courteous in manner, he was also a generous liver and a "two-bottle man." His brother, the Chancellor, said of him, "He will drink any given quantity of port." With all his fondness for eating and drinking, he was extremely frugal; and he was the author of the phrase, "The elegant simplicity of the three per cents."[1] My letter of his seems more gastronomical than judicial, but it is addressed, quite appropriately, to the Master of the Rolls:

MY DEAR SIR,—A thousand thanks to you for the knight's service you have done the Church of England. Do give us the Benefit of your powerful shield. It is an Ægis to us. Will you dine with me on Saturday the 11th. The Hero of the Nile dines with me. Pray do come.

Yours,
W. SCOTT.

"They've done for me at last, Hardy," the "hero of the Nile" said, that victorious day of Trafalgar when the musket-ball from the *Redoubtable* tore its way through his spine. He writes to Hardy:

[1] Disraeli tried to appropriate it. "The sweet simplicity of the three per cents." (*Endymion*).

Jany 30th 1801.

MY DEAR HARDY,—As I see it was the Earl's intention not to give me the one day's duty in Carnsand Bay, I have wrote to Sir Chs. Cotton to carry it on as if I was not present.

Ever yours truly,
NELSON & BRONTÉ.

But the association between Nelson and the lawyers is perhaps better shown by another letter:

April 8th 1803, PICCADILLY.

MY LORD,—Nothing but the enclosed could have induced to have wrote to your Lordship on a business which I fear I am still wrong in doing. But I trust you will forgive me if I am wrong. I have known Capt. Macnamara nine years he was long under my command, and I can assure you that although Capt. M. is not the man to take an affront from any one, yet I can testify with the greatest truth that I never knew him give an affront to any Person.

I am with the greatest respect,
your Lordship's most obedient servant,
NELSON & BRONTÉ.

RT HONBLE LORD ELLENBOROUGH.

After a consideration of the syntax of Lord Nelson, I am disposed to regard the "hero of New Orleans" as a prodigy of accuracy when compared with the English admiral.

In the "English Miscellaneous" compartment is a letter of Lord Chief-Justice Coleridge, in which he says:

I should say that, putting Cardinal Wolsey and Lord Bacon out of the question, Lord Hardwicke is by far the greatest *legal* Lord Chancellor we have ever had.

It requires some courage to dissent from the judgment of a lord chief-justice, but I do not concur in this opinion. I remember, however, that dissenting opinions are not commonly regarded as of much value. The court is strongest when "all concur." In the days of Sir John Pratt (C. J. 1718–1725) concurrences were in vogue, as appears from a reported instance which may not be familiar to the present generation. A woman who had a settlement in a certain parish had four children by her husband, who was a vagrant with no settlement. The judgment is not regularly reported, but it is as follows:

A woman having a settlement
  Married a man with none;
The question was, he being dead,
  If that she had were gone.

Quoth Sir John Pratt, "The settlement
  Suspended did remain
Living the husband; but he dead
  It doth revive again!"

(Chorus of puisne Justices.)
Living the husband; but he dead
  It doth revive again!

All this, however, is not germane to Lord Hardwicke, who wrote this letter, which he never meant that I should possess:

POWIS HOUSE, *Thursday morn, March 30th.*

MY DEAR LORD,—Your Friend, my Lord Ravensworth, came to me last night in order to open a Secret to me, which disturbs his Breast, & to ask my opinion upon it. He thinks the House of Lords is bound in honour to call for the same Papers which the House of Commons has called for, relating to the Enquiry; and that, as no body else calls for them, it concerns him in point of Honour to do it. Great Civility passed between us, but I gave him my opinion clearly & directly in the negative, with my reasons, which his Lordship could not answer. However he did not own himself convinced, & I promised him to turn it in my thoughts last night, & to call upon him in my way to the House this morning, which I shall do. He said that he would call upon your Lordship this morning. If he does, I beg you would dissuade & discourage him from it all you can. In short, it is downright madness. It would be represented as an attempt by us to set up a sham enquiry to contre-carry and defeat the Commons' Enquiry, and indeed such Double Enquiries have generally been made up for that purpose. Mr. Pitt and his Friends would probably take a handle from it to endeavour to make a Breach between the two Houses, & from thence make a pretence for pushing a Dissolution of the Parliament. It is impossible that any good can come from it; and

indeed, I could not find out with what views my good Lord himself means his motion. I thought it right to give your Lordship this notice that you might be upon your guard; but I beg you will let his overture appear new to you, & not discover that you have had this hint from me. I am, my dear Lord, allways

Most affectionately your's,
HARDWICKE.

I do not know the name of the noble lord to whom this epistle was sent, but I see plainly that politicians are about the same in the different centuries.

There is a familiar story that some one said of Lord Brougham: "If he had only known a little law he would have known a little of everything." Notwithstanding the contempt which so many have expressed with regard to Brougham's legal attainments, I am not sure that he was inferior to most of the chancellors. Brougham was an active politician, and naturally incurred the hostility and was subjected to the adverse criticism of the conservative, commonplace people who fill up most of the spaces in English life and at the English bar. His name and fame will live, and I am confident that other chancellors of his time, Cottenham, Sugden, and Truro, for example, have long since been forgotten, except by old lawyers. There was an American citizen who always

called him "Bruffam," and, on being corrected, exclaimed: "*You* may call him 'Broom' if you like, but *I* call him 'Bruffam.'" This shows the cheerful independence of our national character. Whether we call him Broom or Bruffam, here is a letter, written to J. Houston Browne, who published in 1844 a pamphlet entitled "A Letter to Lord Campbell on his charge against Lord Brougham of having deserted the principles he once advocated":

Lord Brougham presents his compliments to Mr. Browne & really feels much indebted to him for having sent him his most kind and most ably written tract which Ld. B. had never before seen. Had he seen it, he would have endeavoured to find out at least so far as to be able to return his unknown defender his hearty thanks. The occasion is gone by, & Ld. B. believes the abuse is less constant than formerly. But his gratitude remains the same & if Mr. Browne would give him the opportunity, Ld. B. would feel most happy in being allowed to make his acquaintance. He is in the morning either at the H. of Lords or the P. Council except Saturday & Wednesday.

Lord Campbell treated Brougham harshly in his memoir, and caused Lyndhurst to remark that Campbell had added a new terror to death.

The *Letters of Junius* have been more talked about and written about than most books, but I never met any one who had read them

all. If the authorship had not been made a thing of mystery, they would no doubt have been long ago consigned to oblivion. I do not know who wrote them, and really I do not care very much to know, nor do I lose any sleep worrying over who wrote *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*, or *The Englishwoman's Love Letters*, or who the Man in the Iron Mask was. None of these things trouble me. There may be curious seekers after truth who are concerned about the matter, but I am not of their number. The best evidence on the *Junius* question tends to establish the claim of Sir Philip Francis, although the testimony is by no means conclusive, and I believe some one has printed a volume which demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt that, of all men in the world at that particular period, Francis is the only man who could not possibly have written *Junius*. Be that as it may, I have a letter of his which is mildly sarcastic concerning America. It is addressed to Edward Tilghman, of Philadelphia:

LONDON, *8th July*, 1805.

DEAR SIR,—After an interval long enough to produce or indicate oblivion, I should not take the liberty to interrupt your repose by reviving the unfortunate subject of my lands in Pennsylvania if I did not think that this effort would be

final. Mr. George Morrow, of Pittsburgh, who will deliver you this letter, is disposed to treat with you for the purchase of the said lands, which, I suppose, cannot be sold by anybody but *you*, as they are held in trust for *me*, in *your* name. If *he* should not make you a proper offer, I then request that you will sell them to somebody else, on any terms, which you think reasonable: and that you will invest the produce, in my name, in the American Bank Stock, in which I have at present, 121 shares, and that you will transmit to me the official receipt for the amount of Bank Stock so purchased. I also request that you, or some of your Posterity, will favour me with an answer to this letter, and tell me the result. I hope to be intitled to fill my next with assurances of my gratitude for the uncommon care which by that time, undoubtedly you will have taken of my property.

Yours,

P. FRANCIS.

I should say that Sir Philip was amusing himself with Mr. Tilghman. Like most Englishmen who "invest" in property in "the States," he seems to have supposed that he owned a bonanza, and that his innocent agent was derelict in duty because the enterprise was not a brilliant success.

VIII

NOBODY can be very fond of *Junius*, but nobody can help being fond of Boswell. Of course, if it had not been for Boswell the fame of Samuel Johnson would long ago have faded into tradition. The typical, unapproachable biographer earned his renown because he was persistently human. We are all of us ordinary, everyday beings, and when we encounter others of our kind who have been inspired to write we greet them as our fellows. Nothing appeals to us so much as a man of our own sort, with our weaknesses, our infirmities, and our limitations. When he describes the life of a great personage, and puts into his work his and our little meannesses and shortcomings, we hail him as a master.

My Boswell letter was written to William Strahan, M. P., the famous publisher, and it has a Boswellian flavor. I feel like spelling that word "flavour," because the "u" gives to it such an added dignity. I am sorry that we have dropped the superfluous "u" from motives

of sordid economy. It lends a certain stateliness to language, and I would preserve it if I could, regardless of expense. But let us get back to the Laird of Auchinleck:

EDINBURGH, 3 *Feby*, 1777.

DEAR SIR,—I trouble you with the enclosed for Sir John Pringle. A dozen of Dr. Johnson's *Journey* very handsomely bound have come safe, of which he has probably acquainted you. It is a great Performance, and will bear much study. I think, however, that I could write notes upon it, which would improve it.[1] I put into the Dr's own hands a copy with notes by Lord Hailes & Sir Alexr. Dick. I wish you would get him to write more. Your friendly recommendation of a higher sphere of action it is not yet in my power to embrace. I am jogging along very well where I am till I see an opening.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedt humble servt

JAMES BOSWELL.

I have some autograph notes on this letter, by George Birkbeck Hill, who says:

Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands* was published as early as Feb. 1775. On June 21, 1774, Johnson wrote to Boswell: "I have stipulated twenty five copies for you to give in your own name." On Feb. 25, 1775 he wrote "I am sorry that I could get no books for my friends in Scotland. Mr. Strahan has at last promised

[1] "Oh, thrice-sodden ass! but what a precious ass!"

D^r SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Pubd as published by ... edition ...

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to send two dozen to you." It was not however till November, 1776 that Boswell received the copies, & then only a dozen. Boswell had before shown his wish to contribute to the book. . . . The "higher sphere of action" which Strahan recommended to Boswell was very likely the English bar, for which he had begun to eat his dinners. He utterly failed at it.

I presume that Hill means that Boswell failed at the bar, not at the dinners. It is a deliciously English idea, that of qualifying a man to practise law by requiring him to eat a certain number of dinners. Lord Stowell said "a dinner lubricates business," and Lord Stowell was a wise man. Byron reminds us that

> . . . All human history attests
> That happiness for man, the hungry sinner!
> Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.

Still, I must insist that the lawyer should not be required to eat his way to the bar, particularly through an English dinner.

After all these profound reflections, I come to my Johnson letter. It is without any distinction, except that it is Samuel Johnson's and it was written to Sir Joshua Reynolds's sister. She was an unmarried lady, but according to the custom of the day it was addressed to her as "Mrs. Reynolds":

DEAR MADAM,—Instead of having me at your table which cannot, I fear, quickly happen, come, if you can, to dine this day with me. It will give pleasure to a sick friend. Let me know whether you can come. I am, madam,

Yours affectionately,

SAM. JOHNSON.

Oct. 23, 1783.

George Birkbeck Hill gives us this note upon the letter:

Johnson's correspondent is Sir Joshua Reynold's unmarried sister Frances. She was born in 1729 and at the age of fifty-four had assumed the matronly appellation. We find Johnson writing to his step-daughter, Lucy Porter, as Miss Porter in 1770 and as Mrs. Porter in 1775. She was born in 1715. Three weeks before the date of this letter he had written to Mrs. Reynolds: "I am very ill, indeed, and to my former illness is superadded the gout. To my other afflictions is added solitude" (*Letters of Johnson*, ii. 357). He had been threatened with a dangerous operation. On October 21 he wrote to Mrs. Thrale, "The operation is still suspended, not without hopes of relief from some easier and more rational way."

No Johnsoniana would be complete without something from Hester Lynch Piozzi, sometime Mrs. Thrale, who lived to be eighty, and who was inclined towards flirtation even at that advanced age. She wrote to Sir James Fellowes when she was seventy-four, in a clear, firm, and beautiful handwriting:

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

Monday Morng, BLAKE'S HOTEL, 7 *Aug.* 1815.

MY DEAR SIR JAMES FELLOWES,—Will wish to hear how all ends, with his much agitated Friend and her troublesome Business; I think all ends in mere Smoke at least for the Present. The Anderdons neither take nor buy, but were excessively civil at last and invited me to a famous Dinner indeed, worthy of old Streatham Park in its best Days,—& *I playd the Company* in my own House, and the Gentleman who sate next me was an Admirer of our Dear Miss Fellowes, & an Acquaintance of yours. We could not I think want for Chat. . . . I was sorry to break with them, but Mr. Anderdon wanted a Place where he could make Improvements, & my successors would have considered no Alteration or Improvement. He wished to cut Trees, & throw down some little Wall, & cut the Windows down. Why good Gracious! The girls would cut my head off. Purchase did not suit him he said—as a temporary Residence was all he required. So I must exert my powers of patient endurance till next London Season, & then proclaim an open sale & if the ladies are offended, who can help it? Merrik Hoare never called to ask if I was dead or alive, so to day I set out on my way back to Bath, where everybody will ask me about Buonaparte, & I shall have nothing to tell. . . . The Funds do fall so strangely and so fast. Should these Explainers of the Prophecies prove the wise men we take them for, and should the call of the Jews be at hand, their taking out such monstrous sums would break us up at once,

but the Turkish Empire must give way before that hour approaches and rapidly as the wheel does run down the hill, increasing in velocity every circle it makes. I can't believe that things are coming so very forward, but that poor H. L. P. may by the mercy of God escape these scenes of Turbulence & Confusion. . . .

Truly obliged,
H. L. PIOZZI.

John Keats, it is said, was "an idle fellow, always writing poetry," but he did not, after all, produce many volumes. He must have been a charming person. "The character and expression of his features would arrest even the casual passenger in the street." His head was small in proportion to the breadth of his shoulders; his hair was of a golden-brown color, falling in natural ringlets.[1] "Every feature," writes Leigh Hunt, "was at once strongly cut and delicately alive. His face was rather long than otherwise. The upper lip projected a little over the under, the chin was bold, the cheeks sunken, the eyes mellow and glowing, large, dark and sensitive." "Like the hazel eyes," says Severn, "of a wild gipsey maid in colour, set in the face of a young god." Haydon says that his eyes had an inward Delphian look that was perfectly divine. Keats died of consumption, and the oft-told story that

[1] Lowell's "Essay on Keats."

he was killed by a famous review has long since been exploded. Byron did much to preserve the tradition by saying:

'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

Keats, poet to the heart's core, made a simpleton of himself about Fanny Brawne; but as he died at twenty-six, much may be pardoned. I have a letter of his, unknown to Mr. Colvin or to Buxton Forman, editors of exceptional intelligence and pertinacity. The very name of the young women to whom it is addressed is absent from the index of either editor. It was written from Hempstead on June 4, 1818, to "Misses M. and S. Jeffrey," of Teignmouth, from which place the poet had just returned. Concerning it, some one has written: "Considering the activity of the maturing process which Keats had been undergoing during his sojourn in Devonshire, as shown by his published letters to Haydon, Reynolds, and Bailey, this letter is curiously boyish. The Misses Jeffrey had been Cynthias of the minute, and had touched none of the deeper chords. They had been agreeable companions at picnics—sisterly, as their mother had been motherly to the motherless poet"—and he writes accordingly:

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

MY DEAR GIRLS,—I will not pretend to string a list of excuses together for not having written before — but must at once confess the indolence of my disposition, which makes a letter more formidable than a Pilgrimage. I am a fool in delay, for the idea of neglect is an Everlasting Knapsack which even now I have scarce power to hoist off; by the bye, talking of Everlasting Knapsacks, I intend to make my fortune by them in case of a war, (which you must, consequently, pray for) by contracting with Government for said materials, to the economy of one branch of the Revenue. . . . Oh! there's nothing like a pinch of snuff, except, perhaps, a few trifles almost beneath a philosopher's dignity, such as a ripe peach, or a kiss that takes on a lease of 91 minutes on a billing lease.[1] . . . I wish you were here a little while, but lawk! we hav'nt got any female friend in the house. Tom is taken for a madman, and I, being somewhat stunted, am taken for nothing. We lounge on the walk opposite, as you might in the Den. I hope the fine season will keep up your mother's spirits — she was used to be too much downhearted. No woman ought to be born into the world, for they may not touch the bottle, for shame. Now, a man may creep into the bunghole—however, this is a tale of a tub—however, I like to play upon a pipe, sitting upon a puncheon; and intend to be so drawn on the frontispiece to my next book of Pastorals. . . . My brother's respects and mine to your Mother, and all our Loves to you. Yours very sincerely,

JOHN KEATS.

[1] First written " building lease " and then altered.

JOHN KEATS

The young dreamer opened the nineteenth century with a brilliant flash of real poetic flame. The eighteenth century passed away with the life of William Cowper. His name, which he called "Cooper," is kept alive as a name, but I will liberally reward any one who can prove to me that, prior to the offer of the reward, he had read *The Task* entirely through. *John Gilpin* may possibly boast some readers even at this day. When I was a boy and had but few books I labored through his *Homer*, and, looking back, I marvel at my own youthful courage. Cowper was so fearful of imitating Pope that he became "bald and prosaic," and produced a translation cramped and halting.[1] I like his letter better than I do his verse:

MY DEAR JACK,—I am glad you can prevail with yourself now & then to stick a pen in your old claw and tell me you are in the land of the living. If your face and person are as little altered as your stile, you must needs be as well worth seeing as ever, and I heartily wish I could have ocular proof of it. Dick says you never could write or speak good English in your life, which is so true yt it were vain to denie it, but your language has always been more entertaining than y^e^ best English I ever met with. I shall be sorry to receive a letter from you in more elegant phrase than usual, and

[1] Leslie Stephen.

immediately conclude yt being too much indisposed to write yourself, you have made holey-poley or your clerk or some such scholar, your amanuensis. I met Dick Harcourt in Hyde Park yesterday, he looked well & was in high spirits, so perhaps he has swallowed the grape shot you speak of with success. Martin Madan's wife is just brought to bed of another son, his family now consists of 2 sons and as many daughters. The girls are both likely to be handsome. I have never seen y^e^ boys, but they say that which is just born has a foot much longer than yours already, so he is likely to be a proper man. I am going to spend 2 or 3 days at the Park, if y^e^ Bankrupts will give me leave; Will Cowper always enquires after you, when he has an opportunity, and so does every Will Cowper I know. They are whimsical fellows, or they would not do it. . . . Farewell, old boy! shall I never see your belly peeping from under your waistcoat again, and your left foot shaking itself upon your right knee? —You date your letter y^e^ 9th of May, no doubt intending to persuade me yt April is past, that so I may forget to make a fool of you—but look well to yourself, for I have a cap & bells yt will just fit you. Yrs, dear Jack, with the old wish of a happy new Year,

TEMPLE, WM. COWPER.
Jan. 11, 1759.

There are certain English poets who assert their title to fame without any very substantial reasons, and among the persons who thrust themselves into the gallery of the gods are such

people as Robert Bloomfield and John Clare. Clare, who died in 1864, at the age of seventy-one, wasted his time largely in scribbling; his parents became paupers, and he himself was compelled to apply for relief to the parish.

My study of Clare leads me to the belief that he was capable only of a very mild effusion of poesy. I do not know whether it is worth while to reproduce my manuscript poem of his—but I will try two or three stanzas at all events:

SLEEP OF SPRING.

O for that sweet, untroubled rest
That poets oft have sung,
The babe upon its mother's breast,
The bird upon its young,
The heart asleep, without a pain,
When shall I know that sleep again.

I love the weeds along the fen,
More sweet than garden flowers,
Freedom haunts the humble glen,
That blest my happiest hours,
Here prisons injure health & me
I love sweet freedom & the free.

Then toil itself was even play
'Twas pleasure e'en to weep,
'Twas joy to think of dreams by day,
The beautifull of sleep.
When shall I see the wood & plain
& dream those happy dreams again.

To MARY HOWITT,
NORTHAMPTON, *July* 16, 1844.

I am at a loss to understand how stuff of this sort could ever be accepted as evidence of poetic capacity. The poet's corner of an ordinary country newspaper will give us better results.

There is a good deal of likeness between those two great masters of the short story, Bret Harte and Rudyard Kipling. While Kipling is easily the superior, Bret Harte really anticipated him, in his own peculiar style, by thirty years, and did for California what his wonderful successor has done for India. Kipling writes:

April 2, 1896.

SIR,—I 'ave received yourn o' the 28th March an' the pamphlick likewise, an' am 'ighly pleased to think you as an ex-jolly consider my verses suitable an' instrucktive to the core, for which I 'ave always 'ad an' ever shall 'old the 'ighest respeck. At the same time I takes my pen to deny emphatic, same as Peter, that ever I spoke even quassi-contempshus of the core in anything I ever done; an' the Boston paper don't know anything about it. When I alluded to them as "bleached," I meant them as swings their 'ammicks on the lower deck under the electricks which makes 'em pale an' like fish-bellies—same as torpedo men & engine room artificers. This is my explanation an' affidavit an' I am

Most respectful yours to command,
RUDYARD KIPLING.

May Bret Harte be considered to be so great that he might as well not be living? He has

been absent so long that he seems almost one of the immortal dead, and I may again violate my rule. Nearly a generation has passed since his star rose suddenly out of the West. Unfortunately, his vein was not deep, and he soon exhausted it, while Kipling is able to open new mines in new directions, and abandons the old lodes without a moment's hesitation. Bret Harte's first Eastern publisher was our old friend Carleton, and most of us remember that first edition of the *Condensed Novels*, with Carleton's cabalistic sign on the title-page. Then came the *Heathen Chinee* and the *Luck of Roaring Camp*, and the star blazed all over the firmament. About that time Harte evidently began to think that he had outgrown Carleton and the queer symbol, and even New York, then but a way station on the Grand Trunk Railway, which had its terminus in the modern Athens, on the shores of Back Bay. He hastened to seek the sacred shrine there established in the domains of James R. Osgood & Co., and this is one of his letters to them:

SAN FRANCISCO, *Jan 1st*, '71.

GENTLEMEN,—Pray accept my thanks for the dozen presentation copies of the *Poems* as well as for their neat and tasteful appearance. If you can obtain from Carleton *The Condensed Novels* by another attempt, I should be gratified

to have my works together, in your hands. Carleton might be made to understand that there is neither money nor reputation for him in the reproduction of that monstrosity. However, he has not written to me, nor do I know anything of the no. of copies he has printed nor of its success. To balance an % with the London & San Francisco Bank here, at the close of the year, I took the liberty to give a draft upon your house for Fifty-five 50-100 Dollars (gold) at sight, which I presume is due to me on % of the *Luck* and wh. I trust you will duly honor. It is my intention to visit the East, leaving here on or abt the 1st Feby— at wh time, if you are successful in obtaining the *Novels*, we can arrange for its republication.

Very truly yours,

BRET HARTE.

In calling the Carleton volume a "monstrosity," Harte evidently referred to the style of the binding and press-work, for the burlesque was excellent and far superior, *me judice*, to Thackeray's more elaborate efforts in the same field. We used to think in the old days that Carleton was an energetic and successful publisher; but when I look at my copy of the first edition of the *Novels*, I am not disposed to find fault with Harte's severe criticism of it. It is a most unattractive specimen of book-making.

We stray very far from Harte and Kipling when we turn to the letter of Mason Locke

Weems, by turns parson, violin-player, temperance lecturer, and book-agent for Matthew Carey; immortal in the annals of America as the inventor of the famous story of George Washington, the hatchet, and the cherry-tree. Apochryphal as are his anecdotes, his books are undeniably fascinating, and his *Washington* is said to be the "most popular biography of that general in existence," eleven editions being published between 1800 and 1811. His *Marion* is scarcely less amusing and entertaining, and no one can ever forget the tale of Marion, the British officer, and the sweet potatoes. The parson writes in a large, eighteenth-century hand to his friend Coxe, of Burlington, New Jersey:

Wm Coxe Esq. PHILADA 9*th* 16.

DR SIR,—Agreeably to promise I called on Mr. Mason, the Engraver on wood. He examind the apples and says they will cost 4 dolls. apiece. But that is nothing. The incalculable utility of your book both as a corner copy of comforts to our families and an Antidote against the curses of all destroying whisky, will, I am persuaded, so rouse all the Southern States in its favor as abundantly to repay you for all yr trouble & expense. Your subject is a most sweet & fragrant one. I pray you give all diligence to embellish it to the highest. I trust you will make it, as Solomon says, like apples of gold in pictures of

silver. In 8 or 10 weeks I count on seeing you. Shall be coming for my carriage to your townsman Mr. Antrim. Will you do me the great favor to desire him to begin it *immediately*. A word from *you* would go a great way towards improving its value both as to materials & workmanship.

As to yr book which I have much at heart, you will have seen Dr. Anderson of New York by the time I next visit Burlington. Much of the individual gain & public good as to this book will depend on the *exquisiteness* of the Fruits—on paper. With the best wishes in the world for yourself & family, I remain yours, M. L. WEEMS.

The parson's credit must have been at a low ebb, for after all this parade about his "carriage" we find, at the foot of the letter, in the handwriting of the venerable publisher, these words: "I am answerable for the amt. of the carriage. M. Carey."

We will not undertake to discuss the question whether George Washington was a greater man than Benjamin Franklin, because after we decide it the world will not be much the wiser. They were both essential to our success in achieving independence. Franklin writes to Dr. Samuel Johnson, the first president of King's College, an institution now popularly known as "Columbia College," and justly eminent in the list of our universities:

REV. SIR,—Enclosed I return your *Noetica* as you desired, that you may add or alter what you think fit before it goes to the Press, in which I should be glad you would be as speedy as conveniently you can.

Since your Way to us is at present block'd up by the Spreading of the Small Pox among us, which (if you do not incline to inoculate) may be a perpetual Bar to your settling here, as we have it every 4 or 5 years, we must endeavor to make ourselves Amends, by obtaining as much of your Advice as we can at a Distance. The Trustees have put it on me, as I first mov'd the English Education here, to stretch out the idea of the English School; for which I am indeed very unfit, having neither been educated myself (except as a Tradesman) nor ever concern'd in educating others. However, I have done something towards it, which I now enclose to you; and beg you would either amend it, or (which perhaps will be easier to do) give us a Compleat Scheme of your own. I suppose the Boys in this School to be generally between 8 years of Age and 16, and that after they leave it they may have time to learn Merchandizing, Husbandry, or any other Profession (that does not need the learned Languages) by which they are to be supported thro' Life. If they have Estates already provided for them, they may continue longer, and make a farther Progress in Philosophy, &c. Mr. Francis and Mr. Peters are both well and desire always to be remembered to you. I have thoughts of taking a Ride to Elizabeth Town to see the Gentleman you recommend. I am with great Respect, Sir, Your obliged hum. servant

PHILADA. *Oct.* 25, 1750. B. FRANKLIN.

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

It seems strange that so practical a person as the author of *Poor Richard* should ornament his signature by the addition of a flourish beneath it. Somehow it leads one to believe that there was a little spice of vanity in Franklin's composition. Fortunately, the flourish has ceased to be customary. It may have been with Franklin only a part of the formality which characterized letters before the days of stenographers and the type-writing machine.

IX

IN a moment of incautious reliance on memory, I made a mistake of fact about General Scott's famous "hasty plate of soup" letter,[1] and my conclusion was erroneous, as conclusions usually are which are based upon false premises. It shows that Davy Crockett's rule, amended so as to read "Be sure of your facts, then go ahead," is a good one to follow.

The letter which aroused so much merriment was written long before the campaign of 1852. Scott, then the general-in-chief of the army, was clamoring to be sent to the front in Mexico, but Marcy, the Secretary of War, was reluctant to afford to a Whig general the opportunity to make a military reputation which might carry the possessor into the White House. There was a spicy correspondence, and in answering one of Marcy's letters the general began thus:

SIR,—Your letter of this date, received about six o'clock P.M. as I sat down to take a hasty plate of soup, demands a prompt reply.

[1] *Ante*, p. 19.

My inference that it was a common and jocose mode of expression of Scott is therefore unfounded, for my own letter is of much later date; but the pleasant use he made of a form of speech which had brought ridicule upon him shows a humorous appreciation of the matter which is quite refreshing. After all, my mistake is not of much importance, except to me, for I always feel sure that I never make a blunder —until I am caught at it.

It is a pity that there are so many men who have no "fads." When I say "fads," I wish to record my earnest disapproval of the dictionary definition of that word, which is: "A trivial fancy adopted and pursued for a time with irrational zeal; a matter of no importance, or an important matter imperfectly understood, taken up and urged with more zeal than sense; . . . a temporary hobby." That is the *Century;* perhaps some of the others may not be as erroneous. I confess that I have a strong antipathy to these much-advertised dictionaries who tell us how many more words they have in them than any other dictionary. There are too many words to worry us as it is, and I favor the dictionary which will cut down the number —Stormonth, for example, who ignores "fad" completely, but he goes too far in that instance.

I do not know what Webster would say about it, for I have never owned a Webster. Colonel Dan Van Buren used to say that Webster was not an authority at all, and that he always thought Dr. Parkman was justified in murdering him. He refused to retract on being assured by a simple-minded auditor that it was not the same Webster, and that it was Parkman who was murdered. The trial of Professor Webster is a fascinating tale of horror. George C. Holt some years ago gave in one of the magazines a very graphic abstract of it, which will bear reading several times. But I am wandering—I was meditating about fads, and the association of ideas carried me away.

I appeal from the lexicographer's judgment to what our old professor of mental and moral philosophy used to call "the unanimous testimony of the unperverted conscience of mankind." The fad is the saving grace of modern life, keeping us cheerful and redeeming us from sordid inanity. When Talleyrand told the whistless man about the sad old age he was preparing for himself, he merely conveyed the thought that without some harmless occupation, engaging the attention and diverting the mind from the regular, daily toils of life, man is but a melancholy thing to contemplate. I have a sort of sympathy with that unaccount-

able individual who "plays the races," although I own that I do not know exactly what that means. I respect the accomplished person who knows all about etchings, the enthusiast who gathers tea-jars, and the gleaner of shabby old tapestries. I can understand how a rational human being may become addicted to golf after reading Sutphen's stories. Conceive the golfer's wrath when he is told that he is devoting himself to "a trivial fancy," and all the rest of it. The golf-man, however, is incited to his nefarious exertions largely by the expectation of seeing his noble patronymic recorded in the newspapers, as, for example, the fourteenth in the autumn handicap, or as qualifying for the second round in the match for the Mardsleyrol Cup. In this respect he differeth not from most of his fellow-beings, who regard the publication of their names in the daily journals, whether on the sporting page or in the "society notes," as delightful items, affording much interest and enjoyment to what President Zachary Taylor called "all the world and the rest of mankind." The autograph collector, the real collector, rises superior to such folly. It is of no earthly consequence to him whether or not his name is in the gazette, rightly or wrongly spelled. The fleeting fame of a newspaper notoriety is to him a matter of no moment.

He knows that the average merchant, broker, or clerk, who toils industriously through his morning paper as he flashes down-town on the lightning trains of the "Elevated" or the swift-darting vehicles of the "Metropolitan," would not know what kind of a curio the collector was if he saw him, and could with difficulty be made to comprehend what the collector was busy about if he should be beguiled into reading anything on the subject. If over half the page should gleam the red headline, "An Autograph Collector finds a Shakespeare letter!" he would turn from it with calm indifference and contempt, to devour with keen relish the delectable descriptions of polo games and prize-fights or the exquisite reports of the stock-market.

When the inexpert attempts to give information about autographs, the result is always amusing and occasionally exasperating. I recall one person who some years ago, in the pages of an otherwise respectable monthly, exhibited himself as a collector—Heaven save the mark!—and deliberately exposed his grossly unprofessional conduct by openly confessing not only that he wrote to men asking for their autographs, but that he *actually accumulated signatures.* Compare him with the eminent Bostonian who carries his feeling against mere

signatures so far that he will not own one of Thomas Lynch, Jr., of South Carolina; and as there is nothing else in the Lynch line outside of the Lenox Library, he can never possess a set of the Signers. I remember, too, a long story in a New York paper about somebody's remarkable collection, in which there were specimens of such notable rarity as Robert Morris, a Continental bill with John Hart's name upon it, and a genuine letter of President John Tyler. Let us turn from such things and dwell no more upon a picture so extremely revolting.

To the collector it is not important whether any newspaper ever gives him a place among those people who were "also present" or who "also spoke." He fails to see the advantage of being thus exposed to public view. The interest of the "press mention" is purely transient, but his occupation is "a joy forever," a thing of beauty—a κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί. The expression reminds me of the story of Keats, in which it is related that when the poet was at work in the company of a medical friend he exclaimed, "Isn't this good?—'A thing of beauty is a constant joy.'" The friend replied, with that enthusiasm so characteristic of friends, "Yes, but it seems to lack something." And then, after a pause, came the line as we know it, at the threshold of *Endymion*.

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

You may call it a hobby, if you please, but I shall continue to assert that my pet pursuit is

> A joy forever.
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness.

I like that word—hobby. There is a solid strength about it. I am not fond of the man who is without one. Not long ago the president of one of the greatest book clubs in the world turned his clear and comprehensive mind away from Japanese art and Whistler long enough to tell me what the late William Maxwell Evarts once said of David Dudley Field, before one of those tiresome committees of the Legislature which in former years gave perpetual audience to those who wanted and to those who did not want a Civil Code. The Code, as everybody knows, was the fad of Field. "I am reminded," said Mr. Evarts, "that once a kindly person, visiting a lunatic asylum, observed one of the inmates astride of a wooden structure, imitating a rider upon his steed. Thinking that he might please the patient, he said, 'That is a fine horse you have there.' The rider answered, with scorn, 'Horse! *horse!* This isn't a horse; it's a hobby.' 'Well,' said the visitor, 'what is the difference?' 'Difference!' said the alleged lunatic, 'all the difference in the world. You *can*

get off a horse, but you can never get off a hobby.'"

Field never got off his hobby; and the president and I will never get off of ours, I am certain. I have my doubts about the Keats tale—not about the president's, for that is unimpeachable. I do not believe that any poet would sit down by the side of a physician—even Oliver Wendell Holmes, S. Weir Mitchell, or John Allan Wyeth —and say to himself, "I think I will write *Endymion*. How is this for a first line?" I am always sceptical concerning most of these stories, usually fabricated by some imaginative and irresponsible inventor, and by frequent repetition they become history. The "good story" commonly belongs among the apocrypha, and the *ben trovato* remark is considerably overworked.

Whenever a witty great man dies, all the smart sayings of the century are attributed to him. When Evarts closed his long and honorable career, it made me sad to see some of the stock anecdotes of antiquity revived and furbished up for the occasion. He said so many good things which were his own that it is cruel to place ancient quips to the credit of the departed statesman. There ought to be a clearing-house for these things, and an appropriate distribution of them, so as to avoid

confusion and prevent the wayfaring reporter from fastening the same story upon several distinguished personages in rapid succession. Jokes ought to be registered, so as not to be transferable to bearer.

There is one anecdote of Mr. Evarts which I have never seen in print and which I have reason to think is true. On one of his later birthday anniversaries Senator Hoar wrote to him and congratulated him upon his length of years. In his reply, the aged lawyer said—I cannot, of course, quote his exact words—that he reminded himself of an old lady in New England who had occasion to write to a friend about some matter of trifling importance, and when she had reached the end of the thirteenth page, awaking to the fact that she had been rather diffuse, she added, "Please excuse my longevity."

It is a common belief that the rich man, with his *carte blanche* order to his agent to buy this or that unique and extraordinary thing, cannot feel the joy of possession as keenly as does the impecunious enthusiast who knows that he is extravagant when he indulges his passion even to a modest extent. A famous silver-millionaire once said that he never realized what it was to be rich until he found that he did not care

whether he won or lost at cards. I think I should like to be conscious some time of the sensation of not caring how much I paid for a manuscript. My wife says—but I am inclined, on reflection, to suppress her remarks, as I suppress my comments on Japanese curios.

The rich man, however, in my judgment, gets more enjoyment from his purchases than we paupers are disposed to concede to him. We all of us know men of ample means who derive the greatest pleasure from their collections, whether of books or of autographs.

But who can describe adequately the exaltation of spirit with which a true collector expands when he acquires by gift, or directly from the writer, a really good autographic treasure! These emotions are almost too sacred to be chronicled.

I have read all my life about the oppressions of the publisher, and it is almost a surprise to find that he can be a merry fellow, after all. It is a consecrated tradition among authors that publishers are to be ridiculed and reviled. The wielders of the pen are always complaining about the man who takes all the financial chances, and who seldom becomes very wealthy. Perhaps it was because he was a good companion

that James Ballantyne failed in business. He makes me dissent from the time-honored perversion, "Now Barabbas was a publisher." I do not care if Lockhart does denounce him as the cause of Sir Walter Scott's pecuniary troubles.[1] Sir Walter wrote of him:

I have been far from suffering from James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say that his difficulties as well as his advantages are owing to me.

Ballantyne writes to John Johnstone, the actor, as follows:

"And so you think to keep me oot o' your party, my dawtie? Na, na: just bring Mr. Johnstone here, and let him dine upon some broth. I want to tell him how he delighted me last night and I couldna forgie if ye dinna fetch him." Such is the omnipotent hest of my good mother and so must it be—with your honour's lave. Deuce take and devil burn this day! What is to be done with it? I have all my cavalry ready and if it clears anything decently by two or half past two, I will call for you, and will take a round till half past 4. Till two I am especially engaged with our friend, the Bard, who is here for a day on his road to Ashe-

[1] I know that Andrew Lang, in his *Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart*, contends that Lockhart never asserted that the Ballantynes were the *cause* of Scott's financial ruin, and insists that it was not his object to establish the proposition that they were solely to blame. His argument on this point is specious, but not convincing.

stiel. I dare say he will dine with us, and I hope you will like it. Will call at half past two, at all events.

Thine

J. BALLANTYNE.

You never played better, seldom as well as last night. Och! it was tremendously great!!!

Yet the fame of this actor whose performance was "tremendously great" rests to-day with only the antiquarian of the stage.

The literary character and the literary life have changed radically in recent years. To read Mr. Howells's delightful record of his younger days in Boston and in Cambridge, and of the colonies of writers there flourishing in the late sixties and early seventies, brings the melancholy reflection that such conditions appear to be no longer possible. I met a clergyman at dinner a few days ago who said that Howells's book was "a stupid performance." He uttered an unconsciously severe criticism upon himself; but then he is of that class of people who obtain distinction, or think they do, by belonging to the minority. It is a cheap sort of glory.

In thinking of this transformation, I have in my mind a charming old gentleman who wrote in what may be called the "Hudson River style." I wish I had one of his letters. I have watched

the catalogues for years in the vain hope that one would make its welcome appearance. He was a refined and gentle creature, a typical rector, and in that period when we were all imitating English models he wrote, in a genial, inoffensive, and some might say in a prolix and euphuistic fashion, his pleasant and innocuous tales and essays. He was distinctly "a man of letters." Dr. Shelton wrote *The Rector of St. Bardolphs, Up the River,* and *Peeps from a Belfry,* and he was one of the bulwarks of *Knickerbocker,* that pioneer of American magazines. He passed away years ago, but his fragrant memory lives in the hearts of the few who were fortunate enough to enjoy the sweetness of his nature and the broadness of his culture. His type has vanished. Like the conventional lawyer of the novel and the drama, and the family doctor, whose funeral oration Dr. Helmuth has pronounced, the old-fashioned "man of letters" has become a part of the life of the past.

Some men have strange habits in the matter of writing. Was it not Buffon who never composed except in full court-dress? Dickens was enamoured of a wretched blue ink, and Irving was accustomed to scribble upon the backs or unused half-sheets of old letters. If you will

go to the bookcase on the right and take down the third volume on the top shelf, you will find the manuscript of chapter viii., volume 5, of the *Life of Washington*, and you will see that it has been written entirely upon such scraps. In the same volume is a letter from George D. Morgan to William Cullen Bryant, written from Sunnyside at one o'clock in the morning of November 29, 1859, conveying the news of Irving's death. Mr. Morgan says:

> Washington Irving is dead. He retired to his room about 10 o'clock feeling more languid than usual, and complaining of pain in his side, but apparently not more unwell than he had been for months past. Just as he reached his room, and while his niece was near him, he suddenly fell and in a moment was gone. A physician was soon with him, but no mortal aid could avail to bring him back. I saw him within an hour from the time he was taken, and he seemed as if in a peaceful sleep.

By the side of the same volume is a small, neatly bound memorandum book, bearing the stamp on the inside of the cover, "Rue St. Honoré. Lavallard. à Paris," and it is filled with notes in the small, not always legible, handwriting of Washington Irving. It is not easy to decide exactly what the purpose of these notes was, but it has been suggested that they may be

memoranda for use in the preparation of the Knickerbocker *History*. Here are some entries:

Yonkers or Jonkers — derived from Jonk heer, a young gentleman. The appellation given to the heir of a Dutch family. Yonkers constituted a portion of the great manor of Philipsburgh until in 1779 the estate was confiscated & conveyed to the people of the State of N. Y. In 1788 it was erected into a separate township. . . . The Neparan or Saw Mill River rises from two perennial springs in the bosom of the Chappaqua hills. To this river the Indians used to offer sacrifices, "the perpetuity of its motion typifying to them the eternity of God" (Qu?) In the N. West corner of the town is the rock Amackasin, or the great stone sometimes called Myhkakaskin and Macakassin. In the Delaware language Mekhkakhasin signifies copper and "akhsin" stone. This stone lies in a nook on the shore of the Hudson, at the foot of a steep bank covered with cedars & laurels (& perhaps hemlocks). Its name was sometimes given to a neighboring brook.

Perhaps the tremendous and appalling Indian names may not be given correctly, and I ask indulgence for them.

The casual reader must be puzzled to tell why all this about Yonkers. Yonkers is a thriving, busy river-side town, which has some interest because it is the home of a poet known of all lovers of literature, who has the touch of Bon Gaultier and of Ingoldsby Barham,

but with infinitely more of delicacy and refinement; and it is also the abiding-place of the author of the *House-Boat on the Styx.* I do not think, however, that when Irving made these notes he was acquainted with William Allen Butler's *Nothing to Wear* or with Barnum's *Parnassus,* and Mr. Bangs had surely not then been born. I do not recall any mention of Yonkers in the Knickerbocker *History,* although there may be a casual reference. I am inclined to believe that my little book was a catch-all, without especial connection with any particular work.

A most interesting, lovable figure in our history, this same historian of Knickerbocker fame—of whom we of New York must be forever proud. The wrath of some of our old Dutch families at his jocose and irreverent treatment of their ancestors was only amusing. Why, Irving gave them their patents of nobility! If it were not for him, where would be our Knickerbocker aristocracy to-day? Not so many months ago I read an article by an excellent dame, in which she lamented that our early history had been defaced by Irving's burlesque, so that no one would take our colonial founders seriously—intimating that no one reads "Knickerbocker" now, but that the sad effects remain; and contrasting us most unfavorably

with New England in respect to our colonial records.

Not read! Publishers are constantly getting up new editions. New England! I would not exchange a page of our genial, jovial story for volumes of the long, dreary, and monotonous annals of our friends who killed old women and persecuted Christians differing with them in their theology.

He was a shrewd observer, too, and had a fair comprehension of politics. He writes from Washington, on February 2d, 1811, to his friend William P. Van Ness:

We are looking with anxiety to your proceedings in our State, particularly in Albany, where you seem to be in a delectable state of turmoil and confusion. I wish you would let us know what Armstrong is manœuvering about, whether he and Spencer are great confidants, and whether he seems to be on full understanding with the Clintonians. For my part, I thank the Gods that I have attained to that desirable state of mind in which I can contemplate these party feuds without caring two straws which side gets the worst of it—my only wish being that they may give each other a sound drubbing. As to talking of patriotism and principle, I've seen enough both of general and state politics to convince me they are mere words of battle —"Banners hung on the outer walls"—for the rabble to fight by—the knowing leaders laugh at them in their sleeves for being gulled by such painted rags.

The great Gibbon had an odd fancy for writing on the backs of playing-cards. Every little while I find one of his autographs thus inscribed. Mine is the "six of hearts" and this is the writing:

Bon pour trois cent livres
à Blondel, mon valet de chambre.
£300 E. GIBBON
à 5 Decembre, 1789.

Considering the way in which the illustrious author of the *Decline and Fall* behaved towards poor Mlle. de Curchod, he might well have chosen clubs rather than hearts as a medium of communication.

Authors generally seem to scorn anything like a plain, readable handwriting, but Payne Collier, who although amiable and industrious has never been acquitted of the charge that he forged alleged old manuscripts in large quantities, appears to have had some conscience about chirography, if we may judge from a letter written when he was more than ninety years old. He says:

There were two bad men of the name of Wainwright it seems. One (he was transported) I only saw once at C. Lamb's; but I did not then know anything of his character and I only just remember him: my father never liked him & how he got to Lamb's I do not recollect, if indeed I ever knew.

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

Before you praised my handwriting, you ought to have waited for the present display of my infirmity. I feel that my handwriting is just upon the turn. I used to write (in my newspaper days) with wonderful swiftness and even now I can get on pretty rapidly: but I never mend a pen.

It is an instance of the fleeting character of a novelist's reputation that the stories of Wilkie Collins should now be neglected. They were good stories; he had a mastery of plot and a style which carried one along as if upon a swift current. But few read the stories to-day. Perhaps they were too contemporaneous, too characteristic of their own time, and did not possess the mysterious quality which gives lasting fame.

There are few English novels more entertaining than *The Woman in White, No Name,* and *Man and Wife.* Those who remember Clara Morris, James Lewis, and Mrs. Gilbert in the dramatized version of *Man and Wife* will always be fond of that book. How pretty Fanny Davenport was, and how comical was George Parkes (of the perfectly fitting garments), whose memory has long since faded!

Collins writes of one of his stories:

Mr. Lacy has misinformed you on the subject of *No Name.* I suffered from a severe attack of illness after finishing the book and being unable

to dramatise it myself, I engaged Mr. Boyle Bernard to make very hastily a dramatic version of the story purely with a view to protect my own interest in it so far as the stage was concerned. The version thus produced was printed and (formally) published under my lawyer's advice. But it has never been represented on the stage—having served its purpose in enabling me to reserve my own right to dramatise my own story when the opportunity offered. . . .

I do not care to enroll myself among the *laudatores temporis acti,* nor to take a place among those who continually do cry, "How much better things used to be!" But great poets, great historians, great novelists — at least, great English-writing ones—are becoming scarce. Let any one try to make a list of living men who may justly be described as eminent in those fields of literature. There is, however, a "mob of gentlemen who write with ease."

X

THERE is a sort of autograph-to-order which I call the mock-modest. It is a surprise to find such a personage as Lord Rosebery indulging in that description of composition. Here is the evidence of his weakness:

> Lord Rosebery presents his compliments to Miss C——— but would rather not make her collection and himself ridiculous by sending it the autograph of an insignificant person.

This phase of Lord Rosebery is by no means as pleasant as "The Last Phase of Napoleon." To say nothing of the absurd self-disparagement which deceives nobody, there is no excuse for denominating Miss C. an "it." He may plead that "it" means "her collection." The plea is overruled. People send autographs to other people, not to "collections." Moreover, the pretence of not sending an autograph while really sending it is puerile, and it is not original. Everybody remembers how Horace Greeley answered an application, sputtering, in his most characteristic and illegible hand,

to the effect that he never, under any circumstances, wrote an autograph for anybody. Lord Rosebery might have refrained from imitating an eccentric American editor. It may be pardoned, perhaps, to a meditating collector to refer to the well-authenticated story that Greeley once wrote an angry letter discharging a printer, which that individual used successfully for years as a recommendation.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson writes far more gracefully than the English nobleman. This is from the New England essayist:

> I have your note. If, as somebody says, applications for autographs are "a shadow cast by success," I suppose one can no more object to them than one can quarrel with his shadow.

While those of us who are enamoured of the "standard" works of fiction are not apt to fall in love with the writers of the present time, yet we cannot treat lightly the popularity of those tales whose many thousand copies are distributed all over the world. After all, the last century has passed into antiquity, and the Barries, the Caines, and the Crocketts have succeeded to the places of the old story-tellers. I have just found a letter of Crockett:

> DEAR MRS. D——,—I need not say that I had a delightful afternoon yesterday with you quietly,

and with your husband and his beautiful first editions. Also rummy, the fascinating, a noble peony-rose, burning a hole in the landscape of a dull day.

"To Hopton House we'll go, we'll go,
A band of young—&c"

Noble woman, thou slayer of yellow asters, I thank thee for that word. And pray accept some 120,000 words of mine. I would give them all for rummy. "To Hop—" &c.

As long as I preserve my sanity
I am, gratefully yours
S. R. CROCKETT

There is just a little obscurity about this letter. It is evident that the lady and "rummy"—whatever "rummy" may mean—were more attractive than first editions. No one would find fault with that, for what sensible person would waste time over first editions under the circumstances?

But I do not intend to quote much from the letters of living men, unless they are so very great that they might as well be dead.

It is not necessary to argue in support of the proposition that Gilbert and Sullivan were public benefactors. It is sad to say "were," and to reflect that the admirable musician has penned his last score and has disappeared from our lives. I like this playful note:

8 *Nov.* 1867.

MY DEAR PAYNE,—I shall hang about the steps of the Conservative Club on Tuesday until the clock strikes 7.30 when I shall boldly enter and demand you and my dinner.

Yrs ever

ARTHUR S. SULLIVAN.

This is another one which gives a glimpse of his pleasant nature:

THE VICARAGE, EGHAM,

9 *Sept.* 1872.

DEAR MADAM,—I received Mr. M's kind letter this morning and am much obliged to him for his offer. I should like to accept it very much, but it is rather costly for me as I am obliged to have a good many conveyances for the infirm or invalid of my family and friends. . . . The cow is well again, I am glad to say—her illness was a great blow to us. . . . We are very comfortable and happy and hope you will be able to let us stay a little longer—only we have rather more rain than we care for. . . .

A blessing upon you, master, who added so much to the world's "stock of harmless pleasure."

The wonderful old man who for two generations filled so large a space in literature and politics was a great writer of letters. There are few collections which do not boast of one or more of the ever-legible pages of Gladstone.

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

He was a fertile producer of postal-card autographs, and he sent forth enough to plaster over the entire surface of the United Kingdom. One of my letters has a slight American interest:

LONDON, *July* 23, 88.

MY DEAR SIR,—In considering your letter I have thought that a note such as the inclosed would answer your purpose and would be my best mode of action. I could not indeed well go beyond it, for I feel that there is something of the same objection to literary contact with Col. Ingersoll as to a scuffle with a chimney sweep. I think it would be futile to make any application to Cardinal Newman at his great age. I am just writing afresh to Mr. Rice to beg and pray for a copy or two of my article on Col. I. which I do not possess in ms. and have not yet seen in print.

I remain, faithfully yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Some time ago, in glancing over the pages of an English weekly with a distinguished name, I came upon a pleasant article by one of London's famous experts, describing the delightful deficiencies of the sale-catalogue of Augustin Daly's library, and the little essay was attractive to such a degree that it led me to convert a portion of my personal property into British currency in order that I might become a subscriber to the journal. I say "journal" advisedly, because it calls itself, despite the

fact that it is issued only once a week, *Journal of English and Foreign Literature, Science, the Fine Arts, Music and the Drama.* To judge from its title, one would say that its field of usefulness is at least reasonably extensive. It makes me think of Mr. Casey's *Encyclopaedia of Useful Knowledge and Ladies' Companion.* I can imagine how one of its stately, cold-hearted contributors would fall crushingly upon any modest American weekly which should style itself a "journal," and would say, in substance: "This publication contains some good passages, but they are so few and far between that we only regret that the editor should have undertaken a task which appears to be beyond his powers; and we are wholly unable to comprehend why it should be called a 'journal' when it is not quotidian."

This journal is always quite unkind towards anything American; it avails itself of every opportunity to sneer at our unfortunate people. In the current number it says, for example: "Mr. Randolph is as hazy in his views as to trade as are most Americans." On the whole, notwithstanding our haziness, we have done pretty well. But ever since I became a subscriber I have been holding weekly revels over the solemnities of this excellent journal and its pompous utterances, which would almost bring smiles to

the faces of the awful statues in Westminster Abbey.

There does not appear to be any adequate reason why English reviewers should be as hard and severe as they almost invariably are. Their style bears to true criticism about the same relation which the conduct of the savage who knocks down the object of his affections and drags her to his home bears to the conventional courtship of civilization. We need not commend an easy-going, perfunctory, adulatory method of reviewing, but there should be no clubbing of a harmless author merely because he may have fallen into a few trifling errors. Any writer is entitled to a fair, generous, and liberal treatment. It is a small and petty mind which will use the power of an anonymous reviewer to denounce and ridicule his subject. A late number of this journal, which comes to us with leaves uncut to an extent arousing feelings of exasperation, proceeds to trample with hob-nailed shoes upon an inoffensive treatise on "American Literary History," by a much-respected Harvard professor, and I quote one of its stately comments:

> The chapters devoted to Poe and Whitman, who are generally regarded in this country as the only writers of true original genius whom the United States have yet produced, are totally inadequate to their subject.

The assertion is certainly disparaging to English literary judgment. I have an impression that there may be some Britons, not reviewers, who have a glimmering idea that Nathaniel Hawthorne ranks at least by the side of the gray poet of Camden; although there are passages in *Leaves of Grass*, such as those which adorn *Enfans d'Adam*, for example, which no doubt appeal more powerfully to the æsthetic sensibilities of the reviewer than the melodious and delicate dreamings of the pure and noble romancist. I have heard, too, that one Ralph Waldo Emerson was much esteemed by our neighbors over the sea, Thomas Carlyle among the number. It is unnecessary, however, to dwell on the subject further than to wish for Charles Lamb's candle and to examine the critic's bumps.

We may admit that Poe is wonderful in a way, but is he immortal? Howells says:[1]

> "Whose criticisms?" asked Emerson.
> "Poe's," I said again.
> "Oh," he cried out, after a moment, as if he had returned from a far search for my meaning, "*You mean the jingle-man!*"

I may remark that when I first observed in a newspaper this Emersonian reference to Poe it

[1] *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*, p. 63.

read "the *jungle* man," and I thought it meant Kipling.

There are those who doubt whether Poe was really a great character. It seems sometimes as if his promise was greater than his performance. However, when a copy of *Al Aaraaf* is bought for $1,300 at a Boston sale, and a first edition of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* commands the price of $1,000, as we have seen within a recent period, we may as well concede the surpassing eminence of that strange personage who would have been amazed to receive an offer of such sums for his entire copyright.

One of my letters is essentially commonplace, but I give it as an evidence of the courtesy of distinguished men. It ought to appeal to the heart of the autograph-lover:

NEW YORK, *May* 25, 1846.

DR SIR,—It gives me great pleasure to comply with your very flattering request for an autograph. Respy Yr Mo Ob St

EDGAR A. POE.

But my favorite letter is the original of one which is given in full, with an excellent facsimile, in Ingram's *Life of Poe.*[1] There is so much in having it before me, in the painfully

[1] *Edgar Allan Poe*, by J. H. Ingram, London, 1880, ii. 107. See Woodberry's *Poe*, p. 277, where the letter is also printed.

elaborate chirography of the hapless poet, whose anguish did not disturb the elegance of his pen-work, that I cannot refrain from transcribing it, familiar though it may be. He wrote it to Mrs. Shew, on January 29, 1847, the day before the death of his wife, whom he dearly loved:

KINDEST—DEAREST FRIEND,—My poor Virginia still lives, although failing fast and now suffering much pain. May God grant her life until she sees you and thanks you once again! Her bosom is full to overflowing—like my own—with a boundless, inexpressible gratitude to you. Lest she may never see you more, she bids me to say that she sends you her sweetest kiss of love and will die blessing you. But come—oh come to-morrow! Yes, I *will* be calm—everything you so nobly wish to see me. My mother sends you, also, her warmest love and thanks! She begs me to ask you, if possible, to make arrangements at home so that you may stay with us tomorrow night. I enclose the order to the Postmaster. Heaven bless you and farewell. EDGAR A. POE.

FORDHAM, *Jan.* 29, '47.

Many things may be pardoned to this erring, brilliant mortal. However we may judge him, it is something to have a London literary despot pronounce him to be one of the two men of original genius produced by America.

Almost everything pertaining to Poe has some attraction for the student of American

letters. Perhaps this autograph manuscript of his, all interlined and corrected in his clear, pretty handwriting, may not be wholly dull:

Before quitting the Mag. just mentioned I saw, or fancied that I saw, through a long and dim vista, the brilliant field for ambition which a Magazine of bold and noble aims presented to him who should successfully establish it in America. I perceived that the country from its very constitution, could not fail of affording in a few years, a larger proportionate amount of readers than any upon the earth. I perceived that the whole, energetic, busy spirit of the age tended wholly to the Magazine literature—to the curt, the terse, the well-timed, and the readily diffused, in preference to the old forms of the verbose and ponderous, & the inaccessible. I knew from personal experience that lying *perdus* among the innumerable plantations in our vast Southern & Western countries were a host of well-educated men, singularly devoid of prejudice, who would gladly lend their influence to a really vigorous journal provided the right means were taken of bringing it fairly within the very limited scope of their observation. Now I knew, it is true, that some scores of journals had failed (for indeed I looked upon the best success of the best of them as failure) but then I easily traced the causes of their failure in the impotency of their conductors, who made no scruple of basing their rules of action altogether upon what had been customarily done instead of what was now before them to do, in the greatly changed and constantly changing condition of things.

I have given only one page of the seven. I do not think it was ever printed. It closes with a pathetic appeal:

> It is very true that I have no claims upon your attention—not even that of personal acquaintance. But I have reached a crisis of my life in which I sadly stand in need of aid, and without being able to say why—unless it is that I so earnestly desire your friendship — I have always had a half hope that if I appealed to you, you would prove my friend. I know that you have unbounded influence with the Harpers, & I know that if you would exert it in my behalf you could procure me the publication I desire.

This is the more pitiful when one thinks how the great houses would scramble to-day for a few pages of Poe. But publishers are not prophets. The men of the '40's could not foresee the *dictum* of the English people in 1901 or the verdict of American critics. For them Poe was the erratic, the irresponsible, the untrustworthy creature who quarrelled with his associates and who penned caustic views of his contemporaries in the intervals of composing what Emerson might have called "jingle verse." Recent biographers insist that his shortcomings were exaggerated by writers like Griswold; but their own admissions show that he must have been at times an exceedingly uncomfortable companion.

We come to the only other original American genius—Mr. Walt Whitman, the person who "loafed and invited his soul."

It may be that Whitman is the consummate flower of our literature and that I am all wrong about it, but, in frankness, he seems to me to be an overrated person. I recognize the fact that these utterances of mine are only a conglomeration of reflections, the vagrant thoughts of an unimportant individual, but I would be willing to submit my judgment on this point to the popular vote; for the taste of our people has gone beyond the rough, the grotesque, and the shapeless.

My Whitman autographs are rather commonplace. This is one:

CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY, *Feb.* 6, 81.

MY DEAR J. L. G.,—I send you the Carlyle piece as requested. Mail me a proof, if possible —if Tuesday forenoon, I can return it Tuesday night. If not possible, pray read proof with extra care by copy. It ought to make just a page. I want without fail fifty impressions of just that page. It can easily be done in the printing office. Another thing I forgot to mention before (& perhaps is not strictly needed any how) I reserve the right to print any of my pieces in a future book, & to make it clearer would you and J. B. kindly, after signing, return to me the accompanying page?

WALT WHITMAN.

I shall again transgress my inviolable rule about letters of living men only to quote from the novelist who is to me a mystery, and whose ultimate place in English letters is to many feeble mortals like myself a problem quite beyond our depth to solve. I wish that he had adopted a style less strange and crabbed.

This letter was written by George Meredith a good many years ago:

SEAFORD, SUSSEX.

SIR,—I have to thank you for your latest volume of poems, and in doing so I must beg your excuse for omitting to acknowledge a previous single poem forwarded to me and which I discover in the present collection. It is usual in such cases to say what we do like and not what we don't like; but I presume a sufficient balance in you to hear both. I like your songs and baby-ballads very much. I like your feeling for English scenery and remarkable descriptive power. I do not like your idylls (e. g. the "Boat Race") because both the poem, the matter, and the blank verse recall Tennyson so strongly, and one expects more than imitation from you. By the way, the giving of a daughter to the conqueror in a boat race is, of British, not customary. A girl might give herself, but for a papa so to stipulate implies unpleasant paternal contempt for the lover's physique and a sort of calculation seldom made, I fancy. You see I speak freely. It seems to me that your taste is not for that you succeed in best, viz: minute description, and thus you might produce a first

rate Dutch home story in ten syllable, eight line or six line verse; but I am passing my boundary in affecting to advise, and must honestly ask you to pardon me for the impertinence.

I am, sir, yours very faithfully,

27th April, 1857. GEORGE MEREDITH.

That was undoubtedly good criticism, uttered in plain and comprehensible English. A later letter betrays a slight sensitiveness to the severity with which some of those merciless fellow-countrymen of his have treated him:

BOX HILL, DORKING.
September 24th 1883.

SIR,—Your letter can but be taken for a compliment. The effect of public disfavour has been to make me indifferent to my works after they have gone through their course of castigation, and I have copies of only a few. *Vittoria* happens to be of the number, but my children are now getting old enough to claim what can be preserved of them; otherwise I would send it. I will when I am next in town see whether a copy remains with the publishers. Yours very truly

GEORGE MEREDITH.

We may infer from this reply what the request must have been. It was surely a remarkable one, deserving of a less dignified and more emphatic refusal. It seems that autograph collectors are not the most presump-

tuous of bores, and that book collectors may surpass them in cool audacity.

A very different sort of reply is that which the big, earnest, energetic, and often wrong-headed Reade gave to some petition:

2 ALBERT TERRACE
KNIGHTSBRIDGE, *July* 30.

DEAR SIR,—"Masks & Faces."

Authors cannot live on air. This piece is either stolen or begged. It is never played on terms remunerative to the Proprietor.

Whilst this still exists, I am compelled to refuse it for benefits. Have refused it to six this year.

Moreover at Benefits it is always pitchforked on to the stage and its reputation lowered. See my current advertisement in *The Era*.

Yrs truly
CHARLES READE

No one can help liking Charles Reade, with his capital letters, his newspaper clippings, his blundering enthusiasms, and his genuine power and fertility of expression. He scolded so beautifully. Somebody had been exclaiming with horror at *A Terrible Temptation*, and he writes—he never gives the year:

The American press has treated me with great insolence and scurrility, but a writer in Canada has gone beyond them all in malignity and mendacity, for he has not confined himself to the cur-

rent work but has also slandered me wholesale. I have therefore singled him out for chastisement; and as much I have said to him is also an antidote to the false criticisms of American iournalists under which I suffer, I shall appeal to your sense of justice to give me a hearing in your columns. I enclose my reply to the Canadian or British liar and shall feel obliged if you will publish it ad verbum in *Every Saturday*. . . .

Looking back with the calmness of a present generation reviewing the works of its predecessor, *A Terrible Temptation*, while perhaps open to criticism in some respects, compares very favorably with much of the unspeakable fiction of to-day. It was certainly over-violent to call it "carrion literature," as it was styled in some of our journals of the time.

XI

"I PURPOSE to write the history of England from the accession of King James the Second down to a time which is within the memory of men still living." Thus does Thomas Babington Macaulay begin his *History of England.* "The subject of my narrative is the history of the people of the United States of America from the close of the war for independence down to the opening of the war between the States." This begins John Bach McMaster's *History of the People of the United States.* "The United States of America constitute an essential portion of a great political system, embracing all the civilized nations of the earth." Thus does George Bancroft introduce us to his *History of the United States of America.* The style of the historian is foreshadowed by the preliminary sentence. One can foresee that McMaster will follow Macaulay, and that the eminent American scholar and statesman will tread his own pathway with ponderous footsteps.

Macaulay's vivid pictures will probably live when Bancroft's stately pages are buried in oblivion, for Bancroft gives us history in full-dress, and is undeniably dry. He is not remarkable for research or accuracy, and whenever any controversy arose about his facts, he generally had the worst of it. It might be said of him as Frederic says of the pirate king in the "Pirates of Penzance": "You make a point of never attacking a weaker party than yourselves, and when you attack a stronger party you invariably get thrashed." Bancroft usually got thrashed, notably by George Washington Greene; but his volumes are destined to rest among those "without which no gentleman's library is complete." He did not mean to be unfair to any one; he was a scholarly person, very well satisfied with his performances; and he was justly ambitious to be regarded as America's principal historian. He was sincerely a patriot, a lover of his country, and honorably devoted to the interests of the Republic. A letter to Justice Swayne indicates his character:

MY DEAR MR. JUSTICE SWAYNE,—I record with equal admiration and pleasure the clear, terse, closely reasoned opinion which you put in my hands at Washington, and think it a masterpiece, differing widely in manner from the loose

style of some famous early opinions. I have now read with the utmost care the Tennessee case, which you were so good as to give me an opportunity of perusing. I discern in it the same lucidity and vigor of statement. Yet my residence in New York and opportunities of observation raise scruples in my mind on the point at issue. It was the commonest thing for selfish politicians of the majority of the legislatures to carry bills which sacrificed the public interest to their own through the Legislature corruptly. This naturally led me to wish to see the power of later legislatures to correct abuses maintained as much as possible in unimpaired strength and to grudge rogues the right which they claim of endowing a success gained by bribery with a sacred character for which it might instantly claim the most exalted sanction. The study of these topics has for me the greatest interest and I am in perfect sincerity.

Yours most truly GEORGE BANCROFT.

While we are conscious of the fact that *Punch* is not overburdened with wit, and, like Artemus Ward's comic paper, might be "improved by a few goaks," we are all fond of *Punch*. Tom Taylor was a dreary editor, but Mark Lemon was, and Burnand is, of a different order. Mark must have been beloved by all his staff. He writes:

Aug. 27, 1856.

MY DEAR P.——,—I am rejoiced to hear that poor dear Gil[1] is better. I trust in God that he

[1] Gilbert A'Beckett.

may recover. When you can leave the poor old boy come home and bring Douglas with you. I am so anxious about you all that it will be a positive relief to know you are at home again. Look up Douglas and S. B. and say to them what I have written. Shirley's boy I hear is out of danger, but he has not sent a line as tho' we did not care about his anxieties. Write by return.

Most sincerely yours,

M. L.

Poor A'Beckett died three days after this letter was written. He worked constantly with Mark Lemon, Douglas Jerrold, and Shirley Brooks, a strong quartet indeed. His *Comic History of England* and *Comic History of Rome* are, it is true, somewhat wearisome to read, like almost all comic histories, and I think they are bought in these days less on account of their elaborate humor than because of the Leech and Cruikshank illustrations. His letter is rather too long for quotation. I have tried not to burden these notes with long quotations; but as a New York magazine some time ago considered Mr. William Harris Arnold's letter from Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Cornelius Mathews worthy of publication, reproducing it from Mr. Arnold's beautifully printed catalogue, a portion of my own letter from the poet to the same Mr. Mathews may be found worthy of perusal. I do not think it has ever been printed.

Mathews, who has not been dead many years, was a voluminous writer, of some originality, whose books are altogether forgotten. He was the first American editor of Mrs. Browning's works, and must have had her highest respect and regard. This letter is dated at London, December 3, 1845. It refers to Browning, whom within a year she married:

It is with shame and confusion of face, my dear Dr. Mathews, that I read your letter and remembered that it was to be enunciated of me "the maid is not dead but sleepeth." Nothing but being actually dead, I do humbly confess, could justify me before my own conscience and your sense of justice, and so there is nothing for me (being too, too much alive!) but to creep on the knees of a contrite soul to the back door of your mercy and to pray her to be at home to me and let me in. Will you or can you forgive me?

"Not dead?" you say—"not even ill" you repeat—can such things be in that old land of corruption, and can they be pardonable.

Not dead—not even ill—I confess—nay, shamefully better, I am—shamefully well I am—and yet you must try to forgive me—try to be consoled for this handwriting of mine in the proper place of that of my executors.

For here is the truth. I am always much better when it is summer, my complaint being weakness of the lungs, and for several summers I have made progress in the gross, though thrown back every winter in some degree on the spikes again.

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

Did you ever "do the sum" about the snail who crept and slipt and crept and slipt? I have, both in a sum and in an experience. Still, in this last summer, my advances were very large. I was quite well in fact, only not quite strong of course, —able to go out in the carriage—able to get into the air and feel "this is liberty again"—and then I was on the verge of an expedition to Italy, in which to hide myself from this winter—and I felt that if I could go I should be well and strong, like other enjoyers of the world's life—and I was hindered in the going—it was too full a benediction for such a head as mine! Well!—and all those intentions and hopes and emotions, and some often get stronger and deeper, absorbed me. It was as if an oyster had the wings of an eagle and lighted on Teneriffe —how could it be expected to think any more of his sand bank—or even of the curlew's cry associated with his former immobility? and *I*, who am not naturally an oyster but had an oyster's life thrust on me—*I* could think of nothing but of the new budding of the new wings—but of the beating of my own heart—I forgot how to write or read. Try if you can understand—I mean to say I thought of nothing long enough to write it down in letters and agree to engagements on it. I could think of *you* sometimes. I could think that I was abominably ungrateful to you and to some others. But I could not write. I read your *Abel* and indeed did my best to get it reviewed by some one capable of entering into the peculiar life of that work. They answered me that it was all in vain—just as you anticipated—and that it was too peculiar, your little book, too

deeply dyed in your national colours, to have a hope of success with readers here; and I could understand something of this from the effect of the book on myself. I could discern the talent, but it missed its hold on me precisely because there was a want of the necessary American stuff in me to hold by. And I tell you this of your *Abel* to prove how I have not been utterly self-absorbed—believe me, I have not. Also, if adversity is good for me, I am now restored to my prison and shut up as of old—not ill, but forced, on the pain of being ill, to keep my double doors shut doubly and my windows hermetically sealed, and a fire by day and night—and having tasted of liberty, the slavery is bitter. I shake my chains impotently. Forgive me for the sake of that piteous sound!

Now—your first charge finds me innocent—innocent! *I never received Griswold's Poets*—never, the *Southern Quarterly—Columbian Magazine* &c &c—never, that packet. I sent repeatedly to Mr. Putnam's, naming Griswold—and the answer has always been "not received." Several newspapers have come safely, for which I have silently thanked you. I had the remittance safely too from Mr. [Langley?] and take shame on myself for not acknowledging it. Will you be so kind—but no, I should write to him I think with my own hand. I was very well satisfied with his report of the poems, and grateful to you all, notwithstanding appearances. As to the proposition about the *Prose Miscellanies*, I could not but be gratified by it, but I wish you to understand that I should be averse from the re-issue of those *Athenaeum* papers without a complete course of re-writing. It

has frequently been urged on me here to throw them (enlarging them in the process) into the shape of publishable chapters on English poetry and Greek Christian poetry; and if Mr. [Langley?] likes to give me time, I do not object to placing a volume of miscellanies from the source designated, and others, in his hands. But should they not be put into proof in London and then transmitted? how should it be? You amuse me when you say that Mr. Poe has dedicated a book to me and abused me in the preface of it. That I should [say was] Roman justice, if it were not American. I know him for a writer of considerable power. And now may I hope without audacity to hear of you and of your doings? I am a penitent—believe it of me. How does *Big Abel* succeed in his land? And what are you engaged on at present? For me, I have been an example of idleness, as you may gather.

Mrs. Butler brings to England "a good report" of American life, and professes an intention of growing old among you when her time comes. In the meanwhile she does not think of returning to the stage here, but rather of assisting her father in his Shakspearean readings by which he makes some sixty pounds a week already, I understand. Mr. Browning has just published another number of *Bells and Pomegranates*, in which his great, original faculty throws out new colours and expands in new combinations. A great poet he is—a greater poet he will be—for to work and to live are one with him. The "Flight of the Duchess" in his last number, has wonderful things in it, and the versification is a study for poets. Walter Savage Landor has lately addressed the following verses to him:

"TO ROBERT BROWNING.

"There is delight in singing, though none hear
Beside the singer; and there is delight
In praising, though the praiser sit alone
And see the praised far off him, far above.
Shakespeare is not *our* poet, but the world's,
Therefore on him, no speech; and short for thee.
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale
No man has walked along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing; the breeze
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
The siren waits thee, singing song for song."

Fine generous lines, are they not? and never a better epithet chosen than the word "hale" for Chaucer? Mr. Tennyson has a pension, you see —but for the rest, is said rather to smoke than to make poems. He has taken a whole turret to himself in the "Castle of Indolence." Dickens is about to cast himself headlong into the doubtful undertaking of the new daily paper, the *Daily News!* The opinions against success are many. It is a great object to combine literature and civil philosophy, both of the highest and purest, and to give the man of letters in England that social status which on the Continent is secured to him. But thinkers have observed, first: that the English people will not have democracy in a journal apart from politics, viz: the old forms of party—that literature will not be permitted to keep place beside what are considered in this country, graver ques-

tions—and that lastly, the social rank of men of letters must be given by society when it is ripe enough to discern and give, and cannot be snatched prematurely. While we offer dinners and memorials to a railway speculator like Hudson, we are not in a condition—our hands are not clean enough—to invite poets across our thresholds. This England of ours is *behind* other nations in the true civilization. I cannot choose but think so. Dear Mr. Mathews, let me have your forgiveness soon, and believe in the continued grateful regard of

ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT.

The "penitence" seems to be a little overdone and perhaps spun out to an undue "longevity," as Mr. Evarts might have said, but the letter shows the traits of Mrs. Browning's intellectual character.

It is difficult for me to tear myself away from the English literature "cases." I have just unearthed this odd bit of Charles Lamb, written, as are so many of my letters, to Ollier, the author-publisher:

DEAR OLLIER,—I have received one or two presents of books from authors, which I can only return *in kind.* Can you let me have 3 or 4 copies of my works for that purpose. Yours &c C. LAMB

I have been in France.
I have eaten frogs.
Poor Percy Bishe!!

Have you done with my old copy of *Don Quixote?*

The letter bears no date, but it was undoubtedly written in 1822. In that year Lamb went to France for the first time, and visited his friend Kenney at Versailles. Shelley died in July, 1822. Lamb's lament is certainly not elaborate.

The thick quarto volume which is always kept in the *best* bookcase, which corresponds to the "spare room" in our old country-houses—that quarto volume, I say, with its hundreds of closely written and much-corrected pages, is the manuscript of "Barry Cornwall's" *Memoir of Lamb*. In it is inserted a characteristic little note:

> Pray let Matilda keep my newspapers till you hear from me, as we are meditating a town residence.
>
> C. LAMB
>
> Let her keep them as the apple of her eye.

So much has been said and written about Lamb and the Lambs, so many *Lives* and *Memorials* have been published, so many editions printed, that the subject is quite exhausted. To most men of the day, Lamb is more interesting than his works. The rushing tide of new volumes, pouring forth from the ponderous presses of the present, has swept away in its flood those productions of the early nineteenth century and cast them into the peace-

ful "coves" or alcoves of the quiet libraries, where they rest undisturbed upon the shelves until by chance some curious student dislodges them, or some reminiscent gentleman of middle age desires to recall the memories of *Elia*.

I remember a certain household in my early childhood where there were but few books, but they were good books; and they were read many times from cover to cover. They were "books for children" in the best sense; not the showy, much-illustrated concoctions of the modern type, but books to make children think and yet to amuse them. The *Essays of Elia* was the favorite in this small library, and one of the children, I know, will never forget his memorable first meeting with the delicious "Dissertation on Roast Pig." That person finds it impossible to forgive the old growler, Thomas Carlyle, for his useless, cruel, and spiteful sneer at poor Charles Lamb.

My manuscript of "Barry Cornwall's" *Memoir* indicates here and there the advantages of careful revision. For example, in the preface Procter referred to his work as "these desultory labours of an amateur in letters," but this was excised during the proof-reading, for it does not appear in the printed book. It was rather too self-depreciatory, for Bryan Waller Procter

was far from being "an amateur in letters." In 1866, when this preface was written, he was seventy-eight, and he had been addicted to literature for at least half a century. He is an agreeable figure in his day and generation. Even our gruff friend, Mr. Thomas Carlyle, called him "a decidedly rather pretty little fellow, bodily and spiritually" — something which the sage of Chelsea certainly was not. It is true that Procter was a conveyancer, and a successful one at that, but a man who has published a half-dozen volumes of poems, a tragedy, several biographies, and two or three books of tales and essays, may scarcely expect to be regarded as merely an amateur. But Procter was really a modest creature. There is a letter relating to his *Essay on Shakespeare*, a work which Mr. Sutton, his biographer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, considers to be the most valuable of his prose writings:

4 GRAY'S INN SQUARE.
21st Oct., 1843.

DEAR SIR, — Will you do me the kindness to accept a little Essay of mine on Shakspere. It has plenty of defects, but I have so much faith in your kind disposition towards me that I think you will see as few of them as you conscientiously can. I beg you to believe me to be, dear sir,

Yours very sincerely,
B. W. PROCTER.

The Lamb *Memoir* is, however, the most delightful thing he ever gave to the world, and the best of the many sketches of the life of the gentle humorist. "Brevity, perspicuity, graceful clearness; then also perfect veracity, gentleness, lovingness, justness, peaceable candour throughout; a fine, kindly sincerity to all comers, with sharp enough insight too, quick recognition graphically rendered—all the qualities in short which such a book could have, I find visible in this." Thus writes the crabbed old Scotchman of Cheyne Row, after reading the *Memoir*, to his friend Barry—a very different tone from that of the "pretty little fellow" remark made so patronizingly years before. But Thomas had just lost his wife and—he was seventy-one. Even a Scotchman may be softened by age and misfortune.

There was a great deal of unnecessary scolding because Dickens gave to Harold Skimpole, in *Bleak House*, some of the characteristics of Leigh Hunt. Hunt's friends were indignant, but their anger was not justified. The cap did not fit exactly, because the little peculiarities of Hunt which were attached to Skimpole were only innocent mannerisms after all, except possibly the ignorance of financial matters, which with Hunt was real and with Skimpole pretend-

ed. No one ever dreamed of giving to Hunt the bad, dishonest traits of the airy Harold. I think that there is no more attractive man of letters of his generation than James Henry Leigh Hunt. He was a cheerful and amiable writer, with a delicate fancy; a handsome man, charming socially; with simple tastes and master of a fascinating style. "He led a singularly plain life. His customary drink was water, and his food of the plainest and simplest kind; bread alone was what he took for luncheon and supper."[1] He writes to our friend Ollier:

HAMMERSMITH, *April* 23, '59.

MY DEAR OLLIER, — As you tell me through Edmund that you cannot write just now, I have consented, like a dutiful correspondent, to receive the information at second hand, looking to beloved old June to bring me my revenge; for how it is that you leisurely gentlemen, and possessors of fine sets of teeth, undertake to be ill in this incompetent manner, and expect a semi-toothless chap like myself—ergo, one full of pains and indigestion — to continue to write nevertheless as if he were not suffering under a hundred incompetencies of his own, is what I cannot very well discover. However, write I do, and shall until you resume your pen. Meantime I shall come and see, for myself, why you don't, as speedily as I can. As the enjoyment of nature and her beauties has so long been a common property between you and

[1] Alexander Ireland.

me, I must tell you of a singularly charming flower which though I am told it has been long in England, was hitherto unknown to me and the name of which, I believe, is Dielytra. It blooms into the shape of as complete a heart (the ideal beauty) as you ever saw, holding (as if in care) the germ underneath it in what turn out to be two arms. As the flower (which is rose-colour) increases, it *expands*, as a heart should do; and in the course of this expansion (observe this pretty symbolical process) the two arms gradually turn up and become a kind of pair of wings as if to set the heart rising to heaven. Fond of flowers as I am, and full of intion [*sic*] as I believe all of them to be, beyond what is known to us, I really think this is the most interesting flower I ever met with. Dielytra means double-spurred, but this does not do the two mysteries justice; so I call it the Winged Heart, and order you and every body else to do the like; and thus, you see, I can give my orders as well as yourself, when I am in the mind. Dear Ollier, orderly or disorderly, I am ever

Yours most affectionately

LEIGH HUNT.

It is something to have written over one hundred novels, even if only sixty-seven of them have contrived to find a place in the British Museum, and also a vast number of *Lives* and *Memoirs;* it is something to have done all this in a lifetime of less than sixty years; it is something to have been burlesqued and parodied by the great Thackeray. This is

what was accomplished by George Payne Rainsford James, who seems to have had as troublesome an experience with the critics as the more profound and philosophic Meredith, according to his letter to Ollier. He writes, from Willey House, near Farnham, Surrey, on July 26, 1848:

MY DEAR OLLIER,—I do not suppose that I shall be in town for a few days and I think in the meantime it would be better to send me down the sheets with any observations you may have to make. I shall be very happy to cut, carve, alter, and amend to the best of my ability. The "sum" can only be described as "Heaven, Hell and Earth," or if you like it better, "Upstairs, downstairs, in my Lady's Chamber." But I suppose neither of these descriptions would be very attractive and therefore perhaps you had better put "The Sky, the hall of Eblis, South Asia." When it maketh its appearance you had better for your own sake take care of the reviewing; for I cannot help thinking that with the critics at least, my name attached to it, is likely to do it more harm than good, unless friendly hands undertake the reviewing. The literary world always puts me in mind of the account which naturalists give of the birds called Puffs and Rees (?) which alight in great bodies upon high Downs and then each bird forms a little circle in which he runs round and round. As long as each continues this healthful exercise on the spot he has first chosen, all goes on quietly; but the moment any one ventures out of his own

W. M. Thackeray

circle, all the rest fall upon him and very often a general battle ensues. I wish you could do anything for my book *Gowrie or the King's Seal.* I have a good deal of money embarked in it.

Yours faithfully,
G. P. R. JAMES.

Thackeray begins his "*Barbazure:* by G. P. R. Jeames," with this sentence: "It was upon one of those balmy evenings of November which are only known in the valleys of Languedoc and among the mountains of Alsace, that two cavaliers might have been perceived by the naked eye, threading one of the rocky and romantic gorges that skirt the mountain land between the Marne and the Garonne." It is unfortunate for the memory of poor James that he should be forever linked with that famous "two horsemen" introduction. I have often thought of invading some library and making actual count of the number of times in which the pair of equestrian gentlemen served to open the story. The truth is that there was much good and little harm in those well-written romances, and if some of our popular tales could be utterly destroyed, and the novels of James read in their place, the world might be considerably the better for it.

XII

THE life of Napoleon III. is a strange story, full of interest and scarcely less romantic than a *Zenda* tale. Whether we take our views of his character from the scathing pages of Kinglake or from the more kindly chronicles of Archibald Forbes, we must acknowledge the existence of some mysterious power in him, united with extraordinary weakness. A prince of the house of Bonaparte, exile, prisoner, President, Emperor, and again an exile; passing long and weary years in foreign lands, sometimes in poverty and distress; giving to France, when he was her sovereign, much that was good, and yet, in many ways, doing much that was harmful to the country which he really loved; he is one of the puzzles of his generation, and it is doubtful whether the enigma of his nature will ever be satisfactorily solved.

A letter from Count d'Orsay in 1848 reveals some of the embarrassments under which Louis Napoleon was struggling just before the Rev-

olution of that year. It was written to Jerdan, the celebrated editor of the *Literary Gazette:*

GORE HOUSE
24 June, 1848.

MY DEAR JERDAN, — I never was more surprised than in reading your note to the article from your French correspondent relative to Prince Louis Napoleon. How a person so candid and delicate with regard to meddling in the private affairs of individuals could refer to the pecuniary ones of Prince Louis does astonish me—were you better acquainted with him and his circumstances you would not have written the note to which I refer. Confiding in your discretion, I, who am perfectly *au fait* of his position will tell you the truth. Of the large fortune bequeathed to Prince Louis by his father, the late ex-King of Holland, he has only as yet been able to realize a small portion, owing in the first instance to the machinations of Louis Philippe exercised with the sovereigns in Italy to prevent the Prince from going there to look after his affairs, or to take possession of the fortune left him. Since then, the troubles in Italy retarded again the completion of different sales which have taken place, and a very large sum which is to be paid to him here has been delayed. Owing to this circumstance he wished to raise some money here, to maintain the punctuality of his engagements for which he has been through life proverbial. Amongst those engagements are the liberal pensions he allows to many old friends and dependents of his deceased parents. I can answer on my honour that he never sent, or intended to

send one penny for political purposes to France, and if you had read his letter of resignation you would have seen that he did so from indignation at the report that he had bought his popularity.

Believe me, yours very truly,

CTE D'ORSAY.

D'Orsay, the handsome and attractive "dandy" of the day, painter, sculptor, and squire-in-waiting to Lady Blessington, was a favorite of Louis Napoleon's. The "most accomplished gentleman of our time," as Lord Lytton called him, had a wonderful capacity for contracting pecuniary obligations which he was unable to satisfy; a sort of aristocratic Micawber he was, with what the late Collis P. Huntington, referring to a well-known personage, termed "a chronic habit of betting on the wrong horse"; and he was glad to seek refuge with his friend, "the Prince-President," in 1849. That faithful friend would have made him Minister to Hanover but for the opposition of his own ministry; and he actually did appoint him "Director of the Fine Arts." Soon after, with all his debts and accomplishments upon him, D'Orsay passed away at the early age of fifty-one, having no doubt in that brief time lived a century.

This note of Prince Napoleon indicates an interest in typography:

Le prince Napoléon desirerait que M. Colburn lui envoyât un spécimen des différens caractères employés dans son Imprimerie.

3 Juin, 1839
17 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE.

We have seen one of his "Lizzy" letters, and here is another one which throws a strong light upon the imperial English:

TUILERIES, *le 8 Fev.* 1853.

DEAREST LIZZY, — Allthough our lifes are changed, my affection for you will be the same, and I hope you will allways rely on me as on your best and most affectionate friend.

Yours sincerely,
NAPOLEON.

It is not difficult to detect one of the elements of rottenness in the structure of that rococo empire which tumbled into ruins at the first strong blow from the stalwart arm of Prussia.

It will not do for me to linger among these relics of departed imperialism. They tell us that we are growing too "imperialistic" in this republic of ours, because we are trying to make the best of a bad bargain somewhere in the far East, where autographs are unknown —the result of a war at which we were all very much astonished when we suddenly found ourselves in the thick of it, and in which we "fumbled" badly until we warmed up to the

game. It is the old story over again of every nation which, after a generation of peace, goes to fighting with an army educated by dress-parades and savage tribes. It was so with our great neighbor oversea when she undertook to chastise the Boers. It was so with her, too, in the outset of the Crimean War, as any one may see who will read Kinglake's graphic accounts of the wretched work there when England was endeavoring mightily to pour forth all her great resources in aid of her army in southern Russia, but with astounding incapacity to accomplish any adequate result. The blundering and confusion can scarcely be described. Medical stores were left to decay when men were dying by thousands for want of them. "Great consignments of boots arrived, and were found to be all for the left foot."[1] There were frauds in the contracts for preserved meats—"canned beef" was not original with us. "One man's preserved meat," exclaimed *Punch*, "is another man's poison." It was then that Florence Nightingale, the daughter of a wealthy Englishman, won her fame by her wise and efficient development and management of the hospitals and the force of trained nurses; and, as Justin McCarthy says, the Geneva Convention and the bearing of the Red

[1] McCarthy's *History*, ii. 234.

Cross are among the results of her work in the Crimea.

How our thrifty English brothers thereafter sought to avail of her as an advertisement appears from this letter, which is quite pathetic:

July 28, 1890.

MY DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your most kind letter. I regret that, as you will perceive when I tell you that I have been an overworked invalid for more than 30 years and for many, many years almost entirely a prisoner to my rooms from illness, there is not the smallest chance of my being able to see your Balaclava charge tho' there is nothing I should like better. I am very sorry, as you wish to have my name, that I must adhere to my poor old rule not to give it. But I am none the less deeply interested in your undertaking.—And I say God bless all my old comrades from the bottom of my heart. Pray believe me faithfully and hopefully yours, and wishing you the highest success. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

Even that cold-hearted, unimaginative person who sees in an autograph letter only a fragment of faded paper with irregular tracings of ink, and cannot comprehend the sensations of the collector when he realizes that he has before him the actual handiwork of the great man who made those tracings, will sometimes grant us the concession that there is a merit about a book which has "associations." I

cannot explain why this is so; perhaps he thinks he could write a better letter himself, whereas he knows that he could not make a book, and the book has a tangible quality, a sort of solid reality about it which appeals to his materialistic nature. I find that I can always arouse a gleam of intelligence when I show this person such a book, while he will turn a dull, lack-lustre eye upon a precious letter of John Keats, or one of Alexander Pope, or even a page of Dean Swift or Samuel Johnson. In my own few volumes of this kind, there is a field for very pleasant meditation—pleasant, at least, to me. They are not many, and when I pore over some of those catalogues I sigh and envy.

That faded morocco-bound cap-octavo is an English edition of *Poe's Poems*, edited by James Hannay; with no date in it, after the abominable custom of some English publishers; containing some of the most execrable of illustrations, including one of a wretchedly elongated being in a dressing-gown delivering an oration to an impossible crow perched on an incredible bust. But it has on a fly-leaf these lines: "Given to Mrs. Benzon,—partly on account of the poetry, partly on that of the dedication at page 33, with all affectionate wishes of Robert Browning, March 7, 67." The dedication on page 33 reads: "To the noblest of her sex,—to the author of

'The Drama of Exile,'—to Miss Elizabeth Barret Barret, of England, I dedicate this volume, with the most enthusiastic admiration and with the most sincere esteem. E. A. P." So we have the record of Browning's appreciation of our "original genius," the meteor who flashed so brightly and who fell so ignobly; and a loving memory of the woman whose name and fame are linked so closely with his own.

There is a book near it, which Tout has dressed in a delicate, greenish levant, almost reconciling one to the loss of the original covers. I wonder why people persist in destroying the old bindings, which are as much a part of the book's being as the printed pages themselves. It is called *Epistles to a Friend in Town, Golconda's Fête, and other Poems,* by Chandos Leigh Esq., and bears the date "1826." On the title—where no one should ever write, on pain of exile from the world of good books—are the words, in Lamb's familiar hand, "Chas. Lamb—the gift of the author." Leigh, who became Lord Leigh later on, seems to have produced a quantity of verse in rather feeble imitation of his schoolfellow Byron, tempered by occasional reminiscences of Pope. He begins his *Epistles:*

How many years are gone since first we met
In Town! the day is well remembered yet.

They did a good deal of this sort of thing in the early years of the last century, and called it "poetry." I cannot find that Leigh was at all intimate with the Lambs; he was the son of a wealthy M.P., and consorted more with lords. His chief distinction is that he was named after his father, and Charles Lamb wrote his autograph in my book.

I cannot imagine what Carlyle could have been doing with a Hebrew Grammar in 1828; but then I am never astonished at anything about Carlyle. This shabby little book—*Brevis Introductio ad Grammaticam Hebraicam et Chaldaicam*, printed "Glasguae, 1721," has on its face, plainly written, "Thomas Carlyle, 1828." It is said that it came from the library of an old gentleman in Dumfries who asserted that it was one of several books which Carlyle had given to him in his college days. I never took the trouble to investigate, for I learned that the old gentleman was dead, which seemed to preclude further inquiry. It does not seem to have been very carefully studied, and its pages are surprisingly clean when one considers that it is nearly two centuries old.

No lover of books can help being attracted by Thomas Noon Talfourd—a sound lawyer,

an eminent Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, friend and faithful editor and biographer of Lamb, author of *Ion: a Tragedy*, and, best of all, the original of the immortal Traddles! *Ion* was produced on May 26, 1836, Talfourd's forty-first birthday, and it met with instant and brilliant success. All the sergeants-at-law went in a body, in compliment to their fellow-sergeant, and it is said that they sat in one box, except Mr. Sergeant Wilde (afterwards Lord Truro), who had a box for himself and his family. Whether they wore their wigs and gowns is not recorded, but it must have been an imposing sight, albeit the worthy lawyers were undoubtedly uncomfortable unless the box was unusually large. My copy of *Ion*, a demy-octavo in faded half-calf, is of the first edition, 1836, by Edward Moxon, and there is inserted in it this letter, written to Moxon on that eventful first night:

MY DEAR SIR,—Will you send me two copies of *Ion* by the bearer? and will you sup with me after the play of this evening, in Russell Square?

Yours faithfully,

TEMPLE, T. N. TALFOURD.
Thursday, *26th May*.

Miss Mitford says that Talfourd's head was quite turned by vanity upon the success of *Ion*, but I do not believe it. It is not in

accordance with his kindly disposition and amiable character. I do not put much confidence in the assertions of that smug old maid. Did she not write this?[1]

What disenchanting things these autographs are! When I was at Clifton my friend Mr. Johnson brought to show Miss James some American signatures. . . . Amongst them was a correspondent of General Washingtons. Washington was a Virginian, remember, and they are all horse-jockeys, . . . and this series of letters from the great patriot contains as notable an endeavor to "do" an acquaintance in the sale of an English horse as ever figured in the annals of Newmarket. I have no great fancy for the celebrated personage in question. He was much too cold and calculating for me.

And then she admits having begged the autograph of—Daniel O'Connell—for "a great man" she thinks him—and the only other thing she wants is a *signature* of Napoleon! It seems to me that this lady's testimony is pretty successfully impeached. We find her writing (May 30, 1836):

Talfourd thinks no praise half enough; talks still of acting the part himself at a small theatre; and would be capable of buying tickets to fill the house for a week provided he could in that way keep it going for that time at Covent Garden. You have no notion of our poor friend's tremendous inflation. . . . Of me he is furiously jealous.

[1] *Life of Mary Russell Mitford*, ii. 282.

It is not difficult to see which one of the two was "jealous." The poor, conceited, self-complacent little woman betrays the truth in every line. And not so very long afterwards we find her begging a frank from "Mr. Sergeant Talfourd." But any one who would accuse George Washington of trying to cheat a man in a horse-trade is capable of almost anything.

I observe that Mr. Warwick Wroth, in his article on Miss Mitford in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, refers to the production of her tragedy of *Rienzi* at Drury Lane in 1828, where it was acted thirty-four times, and says: "Its success caused a temporary coolness between Miss Mitford and her friend Talfourd, who fancied that his *Ion*, which was being performed at the same time, was unduly neglected through *Renzi's* popularity." As *Ion* was not produced until nearly eight years later, Mr. Wroth must be mistaken.

Of this supper, to which Moxon was invited, Crabbe Robinson says:[1]

May 26th.—With a party of friends—Wordsworth, Landor, my brother, the Jaffrays &c &c—I attended the first performance of Talfourd's *Ion* at Covent Garden. The success complete. Ellen Tree and Macready were loudly applauded, and the author had every reason to be satisfied.

[1] *Diary*, iii. 96.

After the performance he gave a supper, largely attended by actors, lawyers, and dramatists. I sat by Miss Tree, and near Miss Mitford. "Talfourd's health" was given by Macready, whose health Talfourd proposed after returning thanks.

Macready gives a detailed and interesting account of this same evening[1] which is too long for quotation. But it is worth noting that at supper at the Garrick Club a week later "Talfourd replied to the encomiums passed on him with great animation, alluding to his early love for the drama, *his interest for Miss Mitford,* and his friendship for me [Macready] whom he eulogized very warmly."[2] So that while this small-minded, envious "female" was chattering to her friends about Talfourd's "jealousy" of her—"so inflated with vanity and so bitter with envy"—Talfourd was sounding her praises and testifying to his appreciation of her merits. Before we say good-bye to the lady, let her speak for herself in her letter to B. R. Haydon, which is postmarked "1820":

THREE MILE CROSS—
Wednesday.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Enclosed you will find a good scolding for Mary Anne. Pray don't keep her if she does not suit—don't keep her a moment out of compliment to her sister or myself. Hen-

[1] *Reminiscences,* ii. 31. [2] *Id.* ii. 36.

rietta is quite enraged at her ill conduct. So am I. I rejoice to hear what you say of your historical commissions. But don't give up portraits yet! Beat them out of their yell! Make them recant! You can and you will if you go on. Miss James says of mine "That it is a very finely painted picture, strikingly like and with an expression that none but you would have known how to have given"—at once the truth and most forcible. What a capital description of the Gymnastics! You are such a man! Do tell me what Fuseli said of Wilkie. It shall be safe upon honour. Very sorry for Ugo Foscolo, I don't very well know why though for there was more of pretence than reality in any of his doings that I ever saw. Fuseli is a loss. I am very anxious about poor Mr. Bayley's play which is coming out tonight. God bless you, my dear friend—have had visitor upon visitor till I have not a moment to spare and I wish Mary Anne to get her sister's lecture as soon as may be. Say everything for us to your dear and lovely wife.

Ever most faithfully yours

M. R. MITFORD.

The papers say that Mr. Macready is bringing out a play of Mr. Knowles. If so he has served a certain Captain Smith as ill as he has me! He is a pretty fellow! Once again my dear friend, God bless you!

The absence of a date, the presence of a postscript, and the spiteful fling at Macready are quite characteristic. She seldom had a good word for any one who did not flatter her continuously.

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

There is something sad in the story of Thomas Campbell, whose life opened with such bright promise and closed in clouds and gloom. The *Pleasures of Hope* made him famous at twenty-one. The duodecimo, dressed in cracked old calf, whose pages I am turning, is of the fifth edition, published in Edinburgh in 1801. Upon the back of the dedication Campbell has written: "To his sister Mary Campbell from the author. It is almost unnecessary to say with what cordial affection the giver presents this token of esteem." As we glance rapidly over the pages our eyes catch glimpses of old friends—"The wolf's long howl from Oonalaska's shore," "Warsaw's last champion from her height surveyed," and

> Hope for a season bade the world farewell
> And Freedom shriek'd—as Kosciusko fell!

But, with the exception of "Hohenlinden"—that "drum and trumpet thing"—"Lochiel," and "Gertrude of Wyoming," with a few lyrics, his writings decreased in merit as he grew older, and degenerated into mere hack-work. Yet he wrote lines which will always live. "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view," "Coming events cast their shadows before," "The sentinel stars set their watch in the sky," bear out the remark of the *Quarterly* that Campbell

had "acquired the immortality of quotation." All these familiar verses come back to one when he stands by Campbell's tomb in Westminster Abbey, where he lies near to Addison, Sheridan, and Charles Dickens.

The translations of Dante by Henry Francis Cary and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow are perhaps the best of the blank-verse form, but they seem to impart an overstrained dignity and stateliness to the poems. They do not appeal to me in any way as much as the version of Thomas William Parsons, who successfully combined the somewhat incongruous pursuits of literature and dentistry. Parsons translated only the *Inferno*, the complete work appearing in 1867. The first ten cantos were published in Boston in 1843 by William D. Ticknor. Parsons attempted but afterwards rejected the triple rhyme, and adopted "the stately and solemn quatrain, the stanza of Gray and of Dryden," because, as he wrote, "this is the nearest approach to the lengthened harmony of the Italian *terza rima* which is recognized by English ears." My copy of this first edition is inscribed "To Henry Lord Brougham and Vaux, with the humble regards of the Translator, Boston, U. S. A." It is further endeared to me by a letter which I was fortunate enough

to find a few years ago, soon after Parsons's death. It is one of those appreciative letters of Holmes, and I am glad that it has found a resting-place between the covers of my book:

164 CHARLES ST.
Sept. 12, 1867.

MY DEAR [PARSONS],—I have received the beautiful volume and though I have not yet had time to read it through, I have read enough to appreciate the skill and the poetical beauty with which you have finished your translation. It is a great honor to our city and country and a proof of the rapid growth of our culture that two such versions as your own and Longfellow's should be given to the public in the course of the same year. I cannot help thinking that each will render the other more interesting. The difficulties of the text are so great that two or three independent renderings of it will be most acceptable to all the more interested and less profoundly instructed class of readers. But I do not wonder at these words, "Tantus labor." To keep so close to the text and yet to turn it into harmonious and idiomatic English verse was a task which might well keep you busy for years. I feel sure that you will get honor and I hope profit for your faithful and admirable performance.

I am reminded that I had your name on one of my proof-sheets a day or two ago in connection with a less important but still a pleasant literary effort. Somewhere, many years ago — perhaps in *Putnam's Magazine*,—you gave a wonderful description of the smell of election day or Inde-

pendence day on the common. I was referring to that—your name was actually before me on my table when the volume came.

I thank you heartily for your beautiful gift. I thank you for this new and noble addition to our literature. I thank you for [all] that you have done in literature, including poems which for tenderness, grace, music and finished art may rank with the best of our or any other period.

Believe me, my dear [Parsons],
Faithfully yours,
O. W. HOLMES.

I find in the *Century* for October, 1901, an article on Parsons by Maria S. Porter, in which this letter is given in full, with a few trifling verbal variances; and the author says that she is "the fortunate possessor of it." I think she is mistaken, and that she has a copy. At all events, *my* letter is dated "1867" and hers "1869." Parsons published his translation in 1867, and it is not likely that Holmes would write of it as a recent work two years after its production. In my letter the name "Parsons" has been erased, as if the owner had taken the precaution to efface it before giving the letter to some friend. The puzzle is interesting to a collector, but doubtless to no one else.

The queer, fat little volume in old blue morocco, printed in London by John Field in 1653, is Sarah Siddons's Bible, which she presented to

James Ballantyne with her autograph inscription; and Ballantyne gave it to Christina Hogarth, the sister of Mrs. Charles Dickens, adding his autograph also. It is a singular history, and one cannot help feeling a sort of reverence for a book which has passed through such hands.

There remains one more book of "associations" to be inspected before we close the chapter — Theodore Hook's copy of *Shakespeare*. I have been spelling the name "Shakespeare" according to the varying notions of others, and I am now spelling it to suit myself. This is the Chiswick edition, in one small volume, printed by C. Whittingham in 1823, in the finest of type—so fine that it might almost be a Brontë manuscript. Hook evidently discovered that it lacked what every book deserving the name should always have—an index—and he has written one on a blank leaf, in his own easily deciphered handwriting. There are also two curious pen-and-ink sketches, representing a gentleman and a lady of the middle nineteenth century, so arranged that when the pages are folded the parties appear to be stout, even corpulent, but when the sketches are unfolded the subjects present themselves lean and eminently "genteel." I do not care very much for this volume, because there is nothing attractive

to me about Mr. Theodore Hook. He may have been a wit; he certainly made it a profession to be funny; but he was guilty of perpetrating what are known as "practical jokes," a most vulgar and repulsive form of supposed humor. After reading the accounts of some of his exquisite feats of coarseness and brutality, one is not surprised to know that Hook was a shameless defaulter, who grossly betrayed an important public trust. The kindly Lockhart attempted to say a good word for him, but was compelled to own that he lacked "every quality especially characteristic of a high-minded man." Fortunately his ephemeral productions are all forgotten, and if it were not for occasional mention in contemporary "diaries" and "memoirs," the name of the author would be buried in like obscurity.

XIII

IT may not be generally known, but I announce it with pardonable pride, that the autograph-manuscript-collecting cult is one of the most ancient in the world and is almost coeval with historic man. I am not aware that it was prevalent in the Stone Age, but it certainly existed among the Greeks in the palmy days of their civilization. It is related that the third Ptolemy refused to supply the starving Athenians with wheat unless he was allowed to borrow the original manuscripts of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, in order that he might make copies of them. Ptolemy gave his royal Egyptian word that they should be safely returned, and deposited fifteen talents as security. The value of the talent varied so much from time to time that I do not know how much of our currency this amount would represent, but we will call it fifteen thousand dollars. Ptolemy made his copies, and then, like any enterprising and unscrupulous collector, kept the originals and sent back the transcripts, cheerfully for-

feiting the fifteen talents. This was what one might call a "forced sale," but I think I should have done the same thing. It served the Athenians right, for they ought to have starved before parting with their autograph manuscripts. I never lend and I never borrow. I do not borrow, because I know the temptation; and I do not lend, because I know the infirmities of our kind.

Cicero was an enthusiastic collector, as were also the Consul Mucianus and Libanius the Sophist. The younger Pliny tells us of a fine autographic "deal" which the elder Pliny might have made if he had possessed a mercantile instinct. I wish I knew what became of all their collections. No doubt they were destroyed when the Alexandrian Library was burned, for that convenient fire accounts for the disappearance of almost every pre-existing papyrus which cannot now be found. All this information, and much more of the greatest value, the inquiring student will find in Scott and Davey's elaborate *Guide to the Collector,* which was published in London in 1891. With this record before us, we are somewhat surprised at the assertion of Mr. Frederick Netherclift—or, perhaps, it is the outgiving of one Richard Sims, "of the British Museum," who "edited" a *Hand Book to Autographs,* published in 1862

—that the taste for collecting autograph writings is "generally believed to have originated in Germany, about the middle of the sixteenth century"! All that I have to say about that statement is that the man who will believe it will believe anything.

A good, well-authenticated manuscript of Sophocles or of Euripides would, no doubt, command a very fair price at a Bangs, Libbie, or Henkels sale. But we must give up such dreams and be content with more modern treasures, whose genuineness is beyond question. We are not to be imposed upon, like poor M. Chasles, the first geometrician of France, if not of the world, who let Vrain-Lucas palm off on him a multitude of fabrications, including three letters from Cleopatra to Cato, one from Lazarus after his resurrection, and one from Judas Iscariot to Mary Magdalene—all on paper and in the best of French!

It is a modest collection, but we know that each specimen is exactly what it purports to be, and a few of them may deserve consideration. The pretty little volume, whose full brown morocco covers and red edges are profusely ornamented with the golden *fleur de lys* of France, is the *Manuscrit Autographe de Mme. de Maintenon et de Melle Daumale,* consisting of *In-*

structions Spirituelles données à Mme. de Maintenon et à la Duchesse de Bourgogne par leurs Directeurs de Conscience. There are fifty-nine pages in the bold and almost masculine handwriting of Madame, written, it would appear, in or about March, 1691, and more than a hundred pages in the smaller and more feminine characters of Mademoiselle. Most of the latter seem to be intended for the edification of "Madame Marie Adelaide de Savoye," who became the wife of the Duc de Bourgogne, Louis XIV.'s grandson.

It must have been extremely gratifying to the learned and virtuous "directors of conscience," this addressing of moral platitudes and grave homilies to the mistress of the Grand Monarch. The admonitions to the Duchess were indited in 1696, the year in which the little Italian princess, at the age of eleven, came to France to marry the Duke, who had then attained the maturity of thirteen years. The Princess left a gracious memory behind her, which is more than can be said of her bad old son Louis XV. This small book of "Avis," "Dialogue," and "Spiritual Instructions" is probably a product of the institution of St. Cyr —"a girls' school, a convent for young ladies of rank, and a good work and recreation for Mme. de Maintenon," as Saint-Beuve calls it.

I cannot quite make out who the little "Melle Daumale" was who acted as scribe for her Royal Highness, but I know that she must have been little because her handwriting is so dainty. Some time when I have abundant leisure I will toil through those interminable memoirs of the period of Louis Quatorze and perhaps I may discover her. She could not have been the Mlle. Daumale who married the King of Portugal, for that event occurred long before 1691.[1]

When Tom Moore was exiled in Paris, on account of the defalcation of that rascally deputy of his in Bermuda, he began a poem which he intended to call "Alciphron." It was one of the pleasing customs of that day to give to a popular literary man a shameless sinecure, an office whose duties he was expected to neglect systematically, while he drew the salary with commendable regularity. All things have their compensations, and robbery by assistants was the usual drop of bitterness in the cup of ease. Moore fled, but his affairs were finally settled by Lord Lansdowne, and the poet acted most honorably. As to the poem, he found it un-

[1] My friend Mr. F. Wheeler, of London, tells me that he is sure that she was a daughter of the Duc de Maine. Louis XIV. presented the territory of Aumale to the Duc de Maine, and it descended through a granddaughter of the Duc de Maine to the House of Orleans.

satisfactory, and he converted it into his single serious prose fiction, *The Epicurean*, which was given to the world in 1827. The edition of 1839, which Turner illustrated, has the "Alciphron" added in an appendix.

This manuscript of *The Epicurean*, which is kept on the top of the old-fashioned cabinet in the north corner, has been clothed by Rivière in a becoming but not gaudy dark-green levant, and it is evidently that which passed through the hands of the printers. It is not the manuscript of the whole book. There are 211 pages in the edition of 1839, and this "copy" begins at page 47, ending abruptly at page 194. It shows on its face that, however smooth and easy the flow of Moore's style may be, he corrected much and altered much as he wrote.

It is amusing to observe the delightful self-complacency with which the little man chronicles in his *Diary* all the nice things which were said to him about his "novel"; how Lord John Russell liked it greatly, but was "sorry he had not made a poem of it"; how Lady Georgina wept profusely at its pathos; how Lord Strangford praised it—Tommy "dearly loved a lord." He received from the Longmans still more substantial marks of appreciation—to wit, more than £700—and the little romance seems to have been translated into several foreign languages.

To be candid, it appears to us to be rather poor stuff. Taine calls it "a poetic Egyptian tale," and there is much in it which may be considered picturesque, but it would find no readers to-day. Moore was not a scholar, and his knowledge of the manners of the time which he attempted to portray was altogether superficial, while he was wholly ignorant of the philosophy which his hero was supposed to represent. T. L. Peacock scored him unmercifully in the *Westminster*, of which no mention is made in the *Diary*, while a laudatory article in *Blackwood* is suitably acknowledged.

In this venture the amiable poet went a little beyond his depth. He was best in what Mrs. Oliphant styles his "confectionary compositions," and in the writing of words to music. The *Irish Melodies* were his masterpieces, and his *National Melodies* are not to be slighted. That large, thin quarto, which Bedford has bound in a painfully ugly light-green morocco, contains some of the *National Melodies*, with autograph words and music in part by Moore—"'Tis the Vine," "My harp has one unchanging theme," "Love and Hope," "I've a secret to tell thee," and other compositions equally profound and soul-stirring. I will not guarantee that the music is in Moore's handwriting, for it

may be in that of Henry Bishop, who arranged it. Pearsons say it is Moore's, and I never doubt Pearsons; if I did, I should be drifting helplessly from my moorings.

Tom Moore was a domestic fellow, fond of his wife and family, posing in verse as a naughty man; a singer who sang entrancingly without any voice worthy of the name; and a poet who wrote charmingly with very little of the divine spark of genius. Almost everybody liked him, and that was the main secret of his vogue. His life was a happy one, except in the closing years, when misfortune, for which he was in no way to blame, shadowed the end of his career.

This manuscript of Southey's "Curse of Kehama" contains the entire poem in autograph, excepting part xxii., "The Gate of Padalon," and part xxiv., "The Amreeta." Southey wrote a singularly graceful, elegant hand, altogether literary in its character, as might be expected of one whom Byron called "the only existing entire man of letters." It has no trace of the scrivener or engrosser, and yet it is thoroughly legible. The manuscript is quite free from erasures and interlineations, but the author seems to have experienced some changes of mind in regard to the introductory verses, the stately overture—

Midnight, and yet no eye
Thro' all the Imperial City clos'd in sleep,
Behold her streets ablaze
With lights that seem to kindle the red sky,
The myriads roaming thro' the crowded ways!

Robert Southey was a most industrious man, noble, generous, and high-minded. He deceived himself as to the greatness of his epics, which he thought would make him immortal—those "great, decorative machines,"[1] "Madoc," "Thalaba," "Kehama," "Roderick." His versification was largely of his own invention, and violated all precedent. "Kehama" was the best of his long poems, became popular in its day, and presents a glowing and ornate view of the Hindoo mythology. He began it in 1801, under the title of "Keradin," but abandoned it for a time, finally bringing it forth in 1810. He himself said of it: "Few persons will like 'Kehama.' Everybody will wonder at it: it will increase my reputation without increasing my popularity. A general remark will be, what a pity I have wasted so much power."

Crabbe Robinson records what Charles Lamb said of it after the first reading. Lamb liked it better than any of Southey's long poems. The descriptions he thought beautiful, particularly

[1] Taine.

the finding of Kailyal by Ereenia. He liked the opening and part of the description of hell, but, after all, he was not made happier by reading the poem. "There is too much trick in it. The three statues and the vacant space for Kehama represent a pantomime scene, and the love is ill-managed." He thought it, however, infinitely superior to "Thalaba." Certainly the address to Love, beginning,

> They sin who tell us Love can die;
> With life all other passions fly,
> All others are but vanity,

is a noble passage, deserving of remembrance.

I could never understand why Southey should have chosen as a motto for his "Kehama" the rather undignified saying, "Curses are like young chickens: they always come home to roost." To be sure, he had it turned into sonorous Greek by Coleridge, and thus inscribed it (with the English original), upon the first page of the book, accrediting it to an apochryphal source: Αποφθ. Ανεκ. του Γυλιελ. του Μητ. It was one of the wise saws of his half-witted half-uncle, William Tyler, who was a sort of playmate of his boyhood, and whose quaint speeches lingered in his mind in later years. But I think that the motto is not quite in keeping with the epic.

In toiling through these elaborate pages of East-Indian lore and imagery, one cannot help having an inclination to agree with Lamb when he said: "I never read books of travel, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors because of their connexion as foes with Christians: but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe I hate. . . . I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, Templar."

In all the relations of life Southey was admirable, even in the matter of answering his correspondents. Bourrienne says that Napoleon let all letters lie unopened for six weeks, in which time most of them had been answered by events; and Mr. Samuel Jones Tilden, that most modest, amiable, attractive, and unselfish of American politicians, is reported to have followed this example. Coleridge, according to De Quincey, had even a simpler method; he opened none and answered none. But Southey replied to every letter at once and without a moment's delay,[1] for he was a gentleman, and respected the feelings of others. His kindly nature may be discerned in his famous remark that a house is never perfectly furnished for enjoyment unless there is in it "a child rising three years old and a kitten rising six

[1] Dowden's *Southey*, p. 122.

weeks." Some of his letters, says Dowden, are written "as if his whole business in life were that of secretary of feline affairs in Greta Hall." We may pass by his "Thalaba," his "Roderick," and his "Kehama" unread, and marvel at his infatuation with his most pretentious productions; but the man who wrote the "Battle of Blenheim" and the never-to-be-forgotten "Story of the Three Bears"—the Great Huge Bear, the Middle Sized Bear, and the Small Wee Bear—is sure of a lasting place in the affections of all English-speaking people.

Written on three hundred enormous sheets of blue paper, seventeen inches by eleven, bound in "half-red morocco extra," is the manuscript of a novel of the elder Dumas—one of his least-known works, called by the undeniably English name of *Black*. It is the story of a dog, and Black is the name of the spaniel-hero. The book is signed and dated, "Fini le 24 Novembre, à 5 heures du soir—A. Dumas." Whether this is one of the numerous tales in which he had the aid of a *collaborateur*, I know not; but if he had, he at least did his own transcribing, for the manuscript was all written by the same person, and that person the one who signed it. Next we come upon another folio, with page on page of the essays of William Hazlitt, in-

cluding a part of the *Spirit of the Age.* It is a sadly disorderly scrawl. This paper, "On Corporate Bodies," begins like a Populist platform: "Corporate bodies are more corrupt and profligate than individuals because they have more power to do mischief and are less amenable to shame or punishment." A disagreeable fellow this man Hazlitt must have been —selfish, self-conscious, suspicious, and easily offended; quarrelling with almost every one; dogmatic beyond belief; a simpleton about women; constantly devoured by an ingrained ill-temper. It is true that the gentle-hearted Lamb called him "in his natural and healthy state, one of the finest and wisest spirits breathing." We can pardon the false figure for the generosity of the tribute, but Hazlitt must have been customarily in an unnatural and an unhealthy state. In his wretched *Liber Amoris* he presents to us a most unpleasant side of his character.

Why should Wordsworth have made a prose version of the "Faëry Queen"? Here are eighty-five closely written folio pages, all bearing at the top the date, like a day-book, beginning on September 16, 1835, and ending on September 30 in the same year. Most of the lines slant queerly upward from left to right. It scarcely seems to have been worth while

for a man of sixty-five, a poet with enduring fame, to waste valuable time on such a task.

The autograph collector does not, as a rule, fare very well at the hands of the literary person. It is true that old Isaac d'Israeli gives us a grave little essay on "Autographs" in the fourth volume of his *Curiosities of Literature*, beginning with this solemn utterance: "The art of judging of the character of persons by their handwriting can only have any reality when the pen, acting without restraint, becomes an instrument guided by and indicative of the natural dispositions." But he confines himself in his comments to a few of the sovereigns of England. Poe's well-known "Chapter on Autography," degraded at the outset by a feeble kind of hoax, made him a few additional enemies, which was a matter of little consequence to him. He says, very truly but not very strikingly: "The feeling which prompts to the collection of autographs is a natural and rational one"; and thereupon he proceeds to discuss the handwriting of a hundred or so of his contemporaries, as exhibiting their respective characters — showing his verdancy by generally choosing only signatures for study. He succeeds fairly well except when he yields to some of his bitter prejudices, and

then he thrusts in the knife and turns it ruthlessly.

Tom Moore makes just complaint of one of the most insidious forms of autograph hunting. "The application to me for autographs becomes a serious nuisance," he writes in November, 1843, "more especially in its new form of asking questions; these questions, too, being generally such as one can hardly in common civility decline answering."[1] One can sympathize with Moore in this affliction, but we must resent the sneer of a charlatan like George Augustus Sala, who takes occasion to say:

> With the introduction of adhesive postage stamps and cheap postage itself, came another great revolution in the national correspondence. Peers and Members of Parliament were no longer importuned for "franks"—being their autographs covering the cost of postage; and the "frank hunter" practically disappeared, to be resuscitated, however, in another incarnation, as the present and equally objectionable Autograph Fiend.[2]

Lowell seems to have begun an essay on autographs, but he did not complete it, as it is not to be found among his collected works. He speaks of it in a letter to Mr. Godkin,[3] where he says that he was "drawn off" from it, and

[1] *Diary*, vii. 355.
[2] *Letters*, i. 354.
[3] Sala's *Life and Adventures*, p. 120.

he appears not to have been drawn back to it. This is unfortunate, for it would surely have been delightful and entertaining. Lowell himself, however, is not entirely devoid of that leonine affectation which the great author assumes in regard to the collector. He writes to Charles Eliot Norton in 1885:[1]

> I am thinking seriously of getting a good forger from the state's prison to do my autographs, but I suppose the unconvicted followers of the same calling would raise the cry of Convict Labor.

Again, in a letter to Mrs. Leslie Stephen, he thus unburdens himself:

> When you tell me that my lovely little god-daughter has been supplied with an autograph-book, an instrument of torture unknown even to the Inquisition, you make me shiver. Albums they used to be called, and, after exhausting the patience of mankind, hope to continue their abominable work under an alias, *Stamm-bücher* the Germans call them (who, cunning in the invention of bores, invented this also) and I rather like the name, because *stamm* has an imprecatory sound and rhymes honestly with the d—n that rises to one's lips when one sees a specimen.[2]

We should call this rather strained and feeble fooling if any one of less consequence than James Russell Lowell had written it. Very

[1] *Letters*, ii. 301. [2] *Id.* ii. 348.

differently did the patient, amiable Longfellow behave, when he sat at his table for hours "writing scores of autographs for far-away strangers." "Such patience," says Mr. Robertson, "might spring in part from fondness for even undiscriminating admiration; but it arose still more from unfailing benignity of nature."[1] We prefer to believe that it was not the offspring of vanity. "Yesterday" (so runs the poet's diary for January 9, 1857) "I wrote, sealed, and directed, seventy autographs."

All these things considered, it is something of a consolation to discover that an author may become a "fiend" as well as a victim. We have seen how the sensitive Mary Russell Mitford cherished her O'Connell signature, her single relic of the fat statesman of dubious patriotism, whom Sam Warren pillories in *Ten Thousand a Year;* and now we have the gentle, graceful, painstaking novelist and historian, Miss Julia Pardoe; the ladies seem to be the autograph seekers. I wish she had written her signature as plainly as her letter; I am not quite sure of the initials. She writes to Horatio Smith — him of the *Rejected Addresses* (usually called "Horace," but why I have never been able to learn):

[1] *Life of Longfellow*, p. 157.

19 WESTBOURNE PLACE
EATON SQUARE, 27/9, 40.

DEAR SIR,—I venture to intrude on you with a request that you will be kind enough to favor me with an autograph on the page of paper which accompanies this note, for a collection which I am making, and of which I am now about to have a volume bound up, and if you would further oblige me by giving me a few lines in the handwriting of your late brother, to which his signature is appended, I should be sincerely indebted to you. Pardon, I pray you, this duplicate request, for wh. my best apology is my anxiety not to omit any celebrated name in my collection, & with compts to Miss Smith, believe me to be

My dear sir,
Very faithfully yrs
J. V. H. PARDOE.

James Smith, partner in the *Rejected Addresses,* died in 1839.

I hope that nobody will describe my amusement as "a ladylike pursuit." That would be a blow indeed. It is strange how much we admire the womanly but detest the "ladylike." I always thought that it was cruel of Thackeray, when he heard of the demise of the good Prince Albert, to exclaim, "Poor, dear gentlewoman!"

And as we are on the subject of women, we may as well read what that sturdy, hard-working novelist, the mighty Anthony Trollope,

with his regular stint of so many lines a day and his microscopic view of British social life, had to say about some matters of feminine interest. Some one had evidently been calling the bushy-bearded story-teller to account for some utterance which Anthony is manifestly inclined to reaffirm and emphasize:

4 *April*, 1879
29 MONTAGUE SQUARE.

DEAR SIR,—The remarks you quote were made by me. You say that it would be dangerous to interfere with "the family arrangement." I think it is impossible to do so to any great extent. You cannot by Act of Congress or Parliament make the woman's arm as strong as the man's or deprive her of her position as the bearer of children. We may trouble ourselves much by debating a question which superior power has settled for us, but we cannot alter the law. To avoid, or lessen that trouble, it is I think expedient to explain and make manifest to all, the facts as they have been settled for us by that superior power,—not as doubting what may be the result. The necessity of the supremacy of man is as certain to me as the eternity of the soul. There are other matters on which one fights as on subjects which are in doubt,—universal suffrage, ballot, public education, and the like—but not, as I think, on these two.

Yours faithfully
ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

Trollope did himself much injustice in his *Autobiography*, because, in his whimsical way,

he exaggerated the mechanical side of his authorship. He conveys the impression of a sordid, plodding scribbler, who regarded his work as analogous to that of the butcher, the baker, and the shoemaker — the work of the artisan and the tradesman. Those who consider with intelligence the whole of his *Life*, who read between the lines and are capable of discerning the truth, regret that he should have given to the undiscriminating reader, who accepts everything as literally true in the precise words of the narrative, *ipsissimis verbis*, an idea of Trollope's character and intellectual power which is altogether erroneous. I am almost in accord with Mr. Howells, who seems inclined to rank him with Thackeray, or, indeed, as the superior of that much bepraised producer of fiction.

XIV

A NUMERICALLY considerable portion of the human race seems for some mysterious reason inclined to spend money for books of "selections" and "extracts." I have often wondered whether anybody ever really reads such compilations. They must be vendible, or publishers would not take the trouble to produce them. I have been foolish enough to buy a few of them, under the mistaken idea that they might be useful as works of reference, but I never open them, and they cumber the shelves, keeping out their betters. I do not refer to some of the excellent anthologies, such, for example, as Stedman occasionally gives us; for collections of poems are of value, because each poem is given completely and is a work of art by itself. Birth-day books are another abomination, where an author's creations are belittled by a presentation in disjointed fragments. Conceive of the effrontery of offering *The World's Best Literature* in forty-five volumes! What a colossal scrap-book, an *olla*

podrida, a heterogeneous medley! I prefer to decide for myself what the world's "best literature" is. The audacity of the enterprise is its only merit. It may be useful in a mining camp in Montana, or in a cattle ranche in Texas. I thoroughly agree with the views of Leslie Stephen, as they are expressed in my letter, although, in his gentle and polite consideration of Mr. R. W. Montagu, he softens his criticism somewhat too much, in my judgment. But Mr. Stephen always preserves the poise of good-breeding. He says:

22 HYDE PARK GATE S. W.
7th 84.

DEAR SIR,—I am obliged by your note and the volume of *Johnsoniana* which I have just received. I am afraid that I cannot make any useful suggestions: for, in the first place, I have so much work on hand just now that I have only had time to glance at it; and, in the next place, I must confess to you that for my own private purpose, selections of this kind are not very acceptable. I like Boswell's "encumbering text" and prefer complete editions. I do not condemn the tastes of others, and your selection may be welcome and profitable to many readers; but I cannot speak for those who do not share my feelings. I can only say that I am glad of anything which popularizes Johnson.

Yours truly
LESLIE STEPHEN.

R. W. MONTAGU ESQ.

but he did not travel thither himself; and his figures exhibit few signs of anatomical proficiency." His horses were always monsters, and the waists of his women absolutely incredible.

I am a little tired of the nineteenth century, and wander back to more remote times. It may be a relief to consort for a season with the pompous dignity of the days of Queen Anne and of the early Georges. Some one has observed the fact that the reigns of English queens — Elizabeth, Anne, and Victoria — have been the periods most remarkable in English literature. We may begin most appropriately with a typical representative of the time of Anne; for Joseph Addison, essayist, poet, and statesman, born seven years later than the Queen and surviving her only five years, is entitled to that distinction. My letter is not, to be sure, much more than a hastily scribbled note, and it is not at all in the style of the *Spectator;* but it is Addison's, and it is addressed to Ambrose Phillips (the "Namby Pamby" of Henry Carey), who wrote the sugary thing beginning "Dimply damsel, sweetly smiling," and who, as Macaulay says, was "a good Whig and a middling poet." Let no critic tell me that he spelled his name "Philips," for Addison has given him the

Dear Mr. Secretary

If it be necessary I must beg of you once more to make my Excuse and I hope I shall not trouble you again on this occasion for y^e^ remaining part of y^e^ Winter.

Friday night.

Yo^r^ Entirely
J. Addison.

double l, and I accept his authority. The title of "Secretary" was given to him because he was the secretary of the Hanover Club, and not because he held any office under the government:

DEAR MR. SECRETARY,—If it be necessary, I must beg of you once more to make my excuse, and I hope I shall not trouble you again on this occasion for ye remaining part of ye Winter.

Yrs entirely,

Friday Night. J. ADDISON—

TO AMBROSE PHILLIPS ESQ.
AT MRS. MANN'S. [1714.]

It is difficult to think of Alexander Pope except as a little, old man, wearing a black cap, and with his hand against the side of his ancient and wizened face, yet he died within two weeks after his fifty-sixth birthday, having written the *Essay on Criticism* at twenty-three and published the first instalment of the *Iliad* at twenty-seven. But we all know well the familiar story of Pitt, prime-minister at twenty-four; Napoleon, conqueror of Italy at twenty-seven; and Hamilton, father of American finance at thirty-two. Pope must have been an insignificant object indeed, with his four feet six inches of stature and his legs so thin that he was obliged to wear three pairs of stockings in order to give them form or substance. Per-

haps he might have prolonged his life if he had not been so fond of "highly seasoned dishes" and "potted lampreys." I never ate a potted lamprey, but I am sure that it would not agree with me, and my constitution is far from fragile. Leslie Stephen, to whom the world is in debt for so much that is valuable in literary history, tells us that Pope was abstemious in drink; but that he sometimes bought wines is proven by my letter, which he wrote the year before his death, addressed "To Mr. Slingsby Bethel, at his house on Tower hill, London"—not the Shimei of *Absalom and Achitophel*, the author of *The World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell*, but possibly the son of that distinguished personage. Pope writes:

Feb. 6th [1743.]

DR SIR—I have been in hopes to find a day to see you; or at least to have met you at Lady Codrington's; but I now hear she does not come to Town at all; and yr good Brother mentions no time for his coming this way, but only in general, if he grows better. I am in yr debt for some wine, but what I now write to you upon, is that I could very much wish you cd take 300^{l} more of mine to make yr 700 an even thousand, if it be not too inconvenient to yrself. I am adjusting several of my little affairs, & am payd in a good deal of money which I do not know what to do with. I must also speedily determine upon a purchase, with yr brother, wch according as I can, or cannot,

D. Sir

Feb. 6. 7h

I have been in hopes
to find a day to see you, or at least to
have met you at Lady Codrington's: but
I now hear she does not come to Town at
all; and y^r good Brother mentions no
time for his coming this way, but only
in general, if he grows better. I am in
y^r debt for some wine, but what I now
write to you upon, is that I could very
much wish you cd take 300^li more of
mine, to make y^r 700 an even thousand,
if it be not too inconvenient to y^r self.
I am adjusting several of my little affairs,
& am paid in a good deal of Money which
I do not know what to do with. I must also

speadily determine upon a purchase with
y.r Brother, wch according as I can, or
cannot, imploy y.e Money, I wd settle
as soon as possible, both his health &
mine being very precarious. For within
these 4 months I am fallen into an asth-
ma almost as bad as his, and hardly a-
ble to stir abroad. I lye at present at
The Earl of Orrery's in Westminster, Dover
Street, whither a Line will find me these 3
or 4 days, and be a particular favour
to D.r Sir

Yr faithfull & obliged
humble Servant,
A. Pope

imploy ye money, I wd settle as soon as possible, both his health & mine being very precarious. For within these 4 months I am fallen into an asthma almost as bad as his, and hardly able to stir abroad. I lye at present at the Earl of Orrery's in Westminster, Duke Street, whither a line will find me these 3 or 4 days, and be a particular favour to Dr Sir,

Yr faithfull & obliged
humble servant,
A. POPE.

The amazing folly which leads men to cut out the signatures from letters of famous persons is a matter of perpetual wonder to me. I cannot comprehend the fatuity which impels rational beings to mutilate manuscripts in such an unjustifiable way. Here, for example, is a letter of Jonathan Swift, dated in 1722, of three closely written pages, which came from the collection of Bishop Percy—a *Punning History of Poetry*, which may be found in the third volume of Nicholl's supplement to Swift's Works; but some miscreant has cut off the last line and the signature. If I could find him I would put him to the torture; I would decree that he should read the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion* from Bull Run to Appomattox. I suppose that the criminal is dead, and that he is suffering in some appropriate corner of Inferno.

The Dean's puns are unpardonably bad, and no one now living would dare to write such abominations as this: "A good poet, if he designs to Tickle the world must be Gay and Young, but, if he proposes to give us rational pleasure, he must be as grave as a Pope." The wretchedness of the paranomasia does not, however, justify the wickedness of the scoundrel who took away the Dean's good name. In the same wrapper is a page of dubious verse, headed "A wicked, treasonable libel," and on the back Swift has written, without much regard for the rules of orthography, this comment: "A traiterous libel writ severall years ago. It is inconsistent with it self. Copyd Sept. 9, 1735. I wish I knew the author that I might hang him." I regret that the nature of this "libel" prevents me from spreading it upon these pages, but I fancy that the coarse humor of it prompted the Dean to copy it rather than his avowed desire "to discover the traits of an author that I might inform against him." Indeed, I am inclined to believe that the Dean wrote it himself.

There is also a long letter to Swift, of five folio pages, from William King, Archbishop of Dublin, dated November 22, 1716, and Swift has endorsed upon it a first sketch of his answer, written, as a note at the foot says, "in the hasty

moment of resentment." The reply actually sent is to be found in the twelfth volume of Swift's Works, in the edition of 1766. Mr. Dunlop says: "King only saw in him [Swift] a clergyman of very unclerical habits, of considerable ability, but of ill-regulated ambition and of overweening egotism. His advice to him to turn his attention seriously to the study of theology, though well-intentioned, was unaccompanied by any substantial preferment, and consequently appeared to Swift impertinent and even slightly malicious." The Archbishop lectures the Dean with some severity, and in his response Swift says, in his clear and vigorous way: "I beg your Grace to believe that I am not mistaken in myself. I allways professed to be against the Pretender, and am so still; and this is not to make my court, (which I know is vain) for I own myself full of doubts, fears and disattisfactions, which I think on as seldom as I can; yet if I were of any value, the publick may safely rely on my loyalty, because I look upon the coming of the Pretender as a greater evil than any we are like to suffer under the worst Whig ministry that can be found." The Dean could always be trusted to give back as good as he received. I am pleased to know that at one period of his life "he filled his time by excessive exercise,

In these days of liberal thought, the mild scepticism of Hume would probably receive little notice; but it appears to have attracted great attention during his life, and after his death attempts were made to prove that he was seriously disturbed by the prospect of dissolution. Varying accounts of his last illness were given. Leslie Stephen says: "The most authentic, according to Dr. McCosh (*History of Scottish Philosophy*), was a story told by an anonymous, but apparently respectable, old woman in a stage-coach, who said that she had been Hume's nurse, and that he had been much depressed, although he had tried to be cheerful to his friends and to her. It is not, indeed, impossible that a man dying of cancer may have been sometimes out of spirits; but perhaps it is more likely that the old lady lied."[1]

When David Garrick died and his funeral procession moved solemnly up the aisle of Westminster Abbey, to the music of Purcell's fine old anthem, by the side of the bier marched the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Camden, the Earl of Ossory, Earl Spencer, Lord Palmerston (father of the Premier), and Sir Watkyn Wynne, while Dr. Johnson, Dunning, Burke, Fox, Barré, and a host of famous men were gathered around the grave opened under the Shake-

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, xxviii. 224.

Uor M

speare monument. I do not like the Garrick monument, and I agree with Elia in condemning it as out of taste. Johnson's familiar tribute is to my mind a much greater memorial—"I am disappointed by that stroke of death which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure." It was to the Earl of Ossory, his future pallbearer, that Garrick wrote, with a reverential deference for the peerage which seems to us republicans rather exaggerated, although it was in accord with the custom of the time:

ALTHORP, *Dec. 24th*

MY GOOD LORD,—I should have answer'd your Lordship's most obliging Letter immediately had not a return of my old complaint kept me in bed at ye time of the Post going away. Mrs. Garrick & I are very unhappy that our Engagements here and in London will prevent us this time from paying our Respects to Lady Ossory and your Lordship—had we known that our Company would not have been inconvenient, we should certainly have done ourselves that honour and pleasure.

I am, my Lord
Your Lordship's most oblig'd and
most obedient servt—
D. GARRICK.

The address to "my good Lord" somehow brings to my mind the story told by that gentle scholar, Ludwig Schumacher, in his dainty

little book on *The Somerset Hills*, of the revolutionary patriot and general, William Alexander, Lord Stirling, who failed to obtain recognition of his title, but who was extremely proud of it, and maintained a kind of baronial luxury at his country seat near Baskingridge, New Jersey. When a soldier was about to be executed for desertion, he called out in his terror, "Lord, have mercy on me!" Lord Stirling, hearing the appeal, replied, warmly, "I wont, you rascal! I wont have mercy on you!"

I confess that Hannah More is always associated in my reflections with the severest morality, the Clapham sect, high religious purpose, and treatises of a serious and didactic nature. The paraphrase of Lovelace's lines seems to be atrociously irreverent:

> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not Hannah More.

But up to Garrick's death she was not averse to fun, and it was not until after that time that she began to experience a conviction that playgoing was sinful, actually refusing to attend the performance in 1787 of her own tragedy of "Percy," which was heavy enough to be proper. She admired Garrick devotedly, and Kitty Clive, about as unlike Hannah as one mortal can be unlike another, was very jealous of

"these Moors," as she called them. It was Kitty—Garrick called her "Clivey Pivey" in a somewhat silly way—who said of him: "Damn him, he could act a gridiron!" It is amusing to find the great actor, who had a profound admiration for Miss More, writing to her as "My dearest of Hannahs," and it is equally amusing to read her account of an occasion when "my beaux were Dr. Johnson, Dean Tucker, and last, but not least in our love, David Garrick." Hannah survived David more than fifty years, but I venture to think that she never forgot him. My letter of hers is kindly, and its reference to Sir John Moore is not without interest:

BARLEYWOOD, *Jan.* 25—[1809.]

MY DEAR SIR,—Your kind *scrap* with the promise of a *letter* came last night, and I hope this will arrive in time to stop your bond. I positively will not accept any money *this* year, so don't send it. If I am living, and the French have not swallowed us up, we may be glad of it another year. But tho' I refuse your money, I will not excuse your letter,—it will be a treat—so pray write. Your kindly intended newspaper did not come, but our own told us tales at which my heart aches. It seems as if God would let us depend on no one but himself. How had we rested our hopes on my brave namesake. I send regards to Mrs. T. I have had a winter of most intense sufferings.

Yrs ever, my dear sir

H. MORE.

Another acquaintance of Garrick's, although he was not a real friend, was the brilliant demagogue John Wilkes, profane, profligate creature, the *enfant terrible* of English politics; ugly, squinting, vicious, full of energy and intellectual strength, but of a character altogether despicable. I always admired his speech in reply to Thurlow. When the Chancellor said, "May God forget me when I forget my sovereign!" Wilkes murmured, "God forget you! he'll see you damned first!" Garrick wrote to him: "*Mon cher* Wilkes! you who will be exiled in this world and damned forever in the next and to whom posterity will set up a statue," etc. Yet he spoke of Garrick, after the actor's death, in harsh and unkind terms.[1]

Wilkes's letter has a dignity about it, but it is probably insincere, for he had not an atom of honesty in his character; and he was justly distrusted by almost every one who knew him:

BERKELEY SQUARE, *May* 1.

DEAR SIR,—I feel much gratified by your kind note. The Electors of Westminster may do as they please. If they choose me on my own terms, that is to say, to act on my own judgement on all occasions, I shall be most happy to serve them—otherwise they must look out for some one else. What-

[1] Fitzgerald's *Garrick*, p. 212.

ever occurs I shall not forget that my conduct has been such as to meet with your approbation.

Your very obliged

JOHN WILKES.

His saying is characteristic of the man: "Give me a grain of truth, and I will mix it up with a great mass of falsehood, so that no chemist shall ever be able to separate them."

A very different man from Wilkes was William Petty, Earl of Shelburne and the first Marquis of Lansdowne, who, while unpopular in a way, was a philosophic statesman and a generous friend of literature and the fine arts. It was Shelburne who told Dr. Johnson that "a man of rank who looks into his own affairs may have all that he ought to have, all that can be of any use, or appear with any advantage, for five thousand pounds a year.[1] The *Letters of Junius* have been attributed to him, but he denied the authorship. He writes, in 1762, to Lord Egremont:

WHITTON, *July* 9, 1762.

MY DEAR LORD,—I send you inclosed a letter from Francis. I have written to him that the opening he mentions of the German Commissariat & Prince Ferdinand's intrigues in it, may be very proper. The consideration of oeconomy may be

[1] Boswell's *Johnson* (Hill), 1889. iii. 300.

even extended to N. America, which has been little consider'd. Where the war has been carried on in like manner however without Plan, Knowledge or Foresight of any sort. But that at present it is necessary to bring back the minds of People to the origin of the War and to their State in 1754. That & that alone can dispose men to form just judgements of the conditions of a Peace, wherever they may come. The Expences &c of the War then becomes a strong additional argument after it has been first shown, that the Intent of it was to defend not to acquire, which is impossible by the Nature of it, being different from all former Wars, even on the Continent, where however the chief part of our expence now lies. He is desirous of the Papers relative to the Kg. of Prussia's offer in 1756—as Mr. Fox, tho' he was Secretary of State that year knows nothing of them, I have told him in all events to come here on Monday. If your Lordship has anything to add, you'll be so good therefore to let me know before that.

I am with great Regard, my Dear Lord—
Your most Faithfull servt—
SHELBURNE.

Gilbert White, of Selborne, curate and naturalist, but a better naturalist than curate, keeps a place in the recollections of book lovers to this day, for his *Natural History of Selborne* has become a classic, famous but unread, in spite of the fact that from time to time new editions are given to us. Some one will tell me that I am mistaken in saying that it is "unread."

I think I can demonstrate that I am right; many people possess copies, but I have never met a man who had read all of it. White's letter, written in a very precise and formal hand, seems to be addressed to an attorney:

SELBORNE, *July* 16, 1782.

SIR,—Whether the agreement between Mr. Box & my grandfather respecting the trees would stand good in law, I am no judge; but there is great reason to suppose that the parties intended & understood that it should be binding. The trees are by no means worth contending about, because they are of little value. And since they are so, I hope the present Lord will be so obliging as to let them remain for the purpose for which they were planted: all except one, which I hope he will order to be taken down because it hangs over my cart-house, & is in danger of falling.

Your most humble servant—

GIL: WHITE.

I am willing to admit that to my own liking the English curate cannot compare with our Gilbert White of America, the observant and fascinating John Burroughs.

Dr. John Wolcot, deacon, physician, and satirist, belongs to this period, for he was born in 1738 and lived to be eighty-one years old. Peter Pindar's poems are too ephemeral to be remembered at this time, and were of that quality

which does not endure, although appropriate and humorous enough for the day. His manuscript in the collection is entitled:

A plaintive epistle from John Ketch Esq.
of Newgate, to William Pitt Esq. of
Downing Street.

He begins:

Sir, you are Minister of State,
And I a Minister of Justice,
But very diffrent is our fate—
Mine will be alter'd soon, my trust is.
While you are ham & turkey carving,
I sir, am literally starving.

This sort of writing would be regarded to-day as fit only for the daily newspaper, yet Pindar was greatly admired in his time. In 1811 he was almost entirely blind, and Crabbe Robinson records the fact that at a dinner he "was requested to help him to his wine, which was in a separate pint bottle, and was not wine at all, but brandy." He told Robinson that he recollected his own writings with no pleasure. "Satire is a bad trade," he remarked. Satire and brandy mixed are bad passports to immortality. While it may be true, as Peter Pindar says himself, that

E'en the whole world, blockheads and men of letters
Enjoy a cannonade upon their betters,

the amusement is not lasting. One generation cannot laugh at the keen thrusts which made its predecessor laugh. Churchill erred when he said:

> When satire flies abroad on falsehood's wing,
> Short is her life, and impotent her sting;
> But when to truth allied, the wound she gives
> Sinks deep, and to remoter ages lives.

The world does not wish to preserve the record of contempt or contumely; it prefers to keep alive the tender, the appreciative, and the loving. If the satires of Horace and of Juvenal are perpetuated, it is because they relate to periods so remote that they have the flavor of antiquity and have become classics. Perhaps Pindar will be a classic in time.

XV

THE novels of Sir Walter Scott appear to retain a good deal of their original popularity, for editions continue to be printed and purchased; but it may be that this is not evidence that they are read by the purchasers. Wealth is so widely distributed in these days, and our country has been so wonderfully prosperous, that private libraries have greatly increased in number; and the owners must necessarily possess *The Waverley Novels.* I am almost ashamed to confess that while I have felt it incumbent upon me to acquire two "sets," I have not been able during the past twenty years to fasten my attention upon any of the tales excepting only one of the poorest of them, according to the decree of the critics—*Count Robert of Paris,* a story which I liked as a boy, and which, in modern English terminology, I should say is "not half bad." It is significant, however, that while Scott's poetry and Scott's *Napoleon* are not in favor with book-buyers, the novels are always in demand.

Dear Sir

Elliot would probably tell you exactly how the
poll stands — Of the two Blackheaths who have left us
there is at least an equal chance that we recover
one. In that case the Election for the Burgh of Edinburgh
and most probably for the seat turns on this one vote of Sempill
I have written to Lord Monteagle from the moment
will be Sempill's tomorrow early and do all in
my power to secure him. I would not fear the
Principle much but George Elliot of Marle is indefatigable
able with a cause at I believe to the no Peebleshire as
seem convenient opportunity to secure the Hanning
Interest. It is cruel to see the Buccleuch interest & all
enemy at this moment owing to our friends absence & illness
last state of health Believe me

yours very sincerely

Walter Scott

Secretary
Abbotsford

Scott dabbled in politics now and then, and was curiously given to figuring as a landed proprietor and local magnate. One of my letters indicates his interest in elections:

DEAR SIR,—Elliot would probably tell you exactly how the poll stands. Of the two blackguards who have left us, there is at least an equal chance that we recover one. In that case the election for the Burgh of Selkirk and most probably for the *seat* turn on *this one vote* of Sampson. I have written to Lord Montagu and in the mean time will see Sampson tomorrow early and do all in my power to gain him. I would not fear the Pringles much but George Elliot of Minto is indefatigable with a view as I believe to stir in Roxburghshire at some convenient opportunity and secure Mr. Hannay's interest. It is cruel to see the Buccleuch interest fall away at this moment owing to our friend's absence, and lamented state of health. Believe me

Yours very sincerely

Sunday WALTER SCOTT.
[*May 2*, 1819]
ABBOTSFORD—

These minor anxieties about elections are absurdly ephemeral, and one does not relish the thought of a great writer engaged in worrying over such passing controversies. It is characteristic, however, of the every-day man, and perhaps it was because he had so many of the every-day-man qualities that Scott ap-

peals strongly to humanity. My letter of Scott's handsome son-in-law and biographer is nevertheless more to my liking, although the blight of politics has faintly touched it. The reference to "P. George of Denmark" rather puzzles me; but the mention of Melbourne is more easily understood. I am sorry to be obliged to omit one passage. Lockhart is writing to Hayward, the man of so many letters, dinners, and reminiscences:

LANARK
July 18, 1837.

DEAR HAYWARD,—I hope to receive Lady Julia's packets soon and will examine them and report to Mr. Cadell immediately. Thanks for your kind tolerance about etiquette which will do quite well in October. I think I shall be in London sometime in that month—and at all events the next *Review* must not be done in my absence. I hope it will also include the *Pickwick* and therein as much merriment as you please for I find the matter on hand is rather sombre and I should like to have not only two but five gayish articles to balance the account. I was rather vexed about our fat friend the Bluebottle—but why did he lug in Croker and Joseph Hume as a leading humbug of the age in one of his late pamphlets? He might have known there would be a day of reckoning—and can't wonder that my absence should have been taken advantage of. But all this between ourselves. I am in the midst of an electioneering row (as who is not?) but I can't pluck up spirit

and take any interest in it. As for the Carlton I have long despised and even loathed it and its doings, and feel convinced that Toryism will never thrive until there has been a cholera sent expressly to make a clean sweep of the old red-tapers whose base trickeries alone could have prevented the intellect, character and property of the country from routing the whigradical confederacy and Erebus long ago.

Who is to be P. George of Denmark? What a pity that the Earl Marshall whom she asked about the place for her garter had not been *tant soit peu* a Melbourne. . . . . I suppose Hook will soon be Baron Von Fuddle-vum-Pipesenstein and covered all over with the stars and crosses of Herrenhausen. The History of Hanover must now go on like smoke. I wish *we* could be allowed about at the Dedication. Yours truly

J. G. LOCKHART

Possibly Bulwer may not be "literature," yet the man who gave to the drama "Richelieu" and "The Lady of Lyons," and to fiction *The Last Days of Pompeii* and *My Novel,* surely deserves recognition in the empire of letters. Tennyson was rather caddish when he called him

> The padded man—that wears the stays,
> Who killed the girls and thrilled the boys
> With dandy pathos.

Tennyson must have been in a villanous humor when he sent his "New Timon" to *Punch* and scored his critic so unmercifully, descending to

billingsgate — for that is the only descriptive name to give to such a verse as the unpardonable one:

> What profits now to understand
> The merits of a spotless shirt,
> A dapper boot—a little hand—
> If half the little soul is dirt?

I believe that the Laureate was sorry afterwards for what he thus wrote in his haste and anger. I sincerely trust that he was; and I cannot resist the feeling that an affectation of clean linen and neat foot-gear has as much to commend it as that of long cloaks, long beard, brutal brusqueness, and persistent chanting of one's own poems. Bulwer must have been a more pleasant man to meet than the flattered singer, the peer of the realm, the unmannerly autocrat, whose personal vanity was almost as great as that of Brevet Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott, and I cannot compare it with anything more colossal. I yield to no one in my admiration for Lord Tennyson, but I refuse to concede to him the right to be inexpressibly rude and offensive to his innocent fellow-beings. There were great men before Agamemnon, and there were greater poets who were entitled to "the grand old name of gentleman."

Bulwer's little foibles of style are amusingly called to mind in Thackeray's *George de Barn-*

well, but a man must do something very well to be burlesqued; and when we compare *The Last Days of Pompeii* with the tinsel and the pseudo-classicism of *Quo Vadis?* we cannot resist the temptation to say that, after all,

The old *is* better than the new.

Bulwer's letter seems to me to have a kindly tone, and it is far from being egotistical:

DEAR ELLIS,—I am very much obliged by your kind note—and delighted to find you have had some gratification in reading what I often regret to have written. There is no worse curse than to live too fast— All authors do so—their hearts grow old before their time—and they cease to enjoy as they begin to struggle. But enough of this. I believe Bentley and Saunders and Oxley to be the best publishers for all light works. But I fear neither they nor any publisher will give much for translations from the French, they get translations done *incredibly* cheap—and even then they complain that they seldom realize the expense of printing. But Bentley might perhaps undertake it and would be worth trying. I do not remember by whom Mill's *Economy* is published, nor can I lay my hand on the book to see. But I remember to have bought it at Joslings & Eyley's, New Bond St. where you can no doubt obtain it. His best writings (his *Essays on Government* &c) are printed privately and not sold.

Believe me, dear Ellis

Truly yrs E. L. BULWER.

autographs. I make a bad subject enough to the photographers but the cards you send me are more unkind to me than Nature herself and I fancied, by waiting a little, I might send you, in their stead, such as my friends prefer. But I have not had opportunity lately to be in the city.

Respectfully

MR. CIST— R. W. EMERSON—

Cist was a notorious seeker after autographs, and shamelessly beset all distinguished men for examples of their chirography. He must have been an appalling nuisance.

George Birkbeck Hill, a discriminating and delightful writer on books and book-men, gives Charles Darwin a place in his *Talks About Autographs*, and I am rather proud to say that my Darwin letter is better than his. I must own that the venerable author of the *Origin of Species* writes very indistinctly, and I have been compelled to make a wild guess at some of the words, but I defy Sherlock Holmes to detect the meaning of some of his hieroglyphics. It does not much matter, for the substance of the letter may be discovered:

Jan 27.

BICKENHAM—

MY DEAR SIR,—I was so ill yesterday I hardly knew what I wrote. I am infinitely obliged to you. I should be grateful for any other correc-

If you correct in clean
sheets. — Again accept
my cordial thanks
for your
Ch. Darwin
Good God how glad I
shall be when I can
give to world the
completed book of
my head —
So you will be with us, Friday —
I hope, I consider, accepted
all your corrections
except Chlorëa.

UCL

tions in Vol. 2, but never mind mere ordinary words misspelt, as reader will see oversight. But any names or scientific terms wrongly spelt ought to be corrected. I find Sir J. Lubbock spells Chloeon (?) as I do, so I have left it. *Trostritica* (?) is an awful blunder and . . . I felt I was in error, but stupidly I did not look to any book. I am always blundering in names and scientific terms. About Snipes gross oversight in reasoning, but this must stand till new edit. if there ever is one. In Vol 2 I remember in 2d revise correcting Callhorrhinus (?) and Delianus (?) so I hope they are correct in clean sheets. Again accept my cordial thanks. Yours sincerely

CH. DARWIN—

Good God how glad I shall be when I can drive the whole of the confounded book out of my head. So you will be . . . I have of course accepted all your corrections except Chloëon—

Passing from literature and science to theology, or, to speak more accurately, to pulpit eloquence, we find the autograph of John Wesley, father of Methodism, a worthy and venerable figure, justly famous for all time. It is said that he married, when past fifty, a lady of apparent piety who treated him abominably, and who abandoned him after robbing him of important papers, whereupon he calmly said: "*Non eam reliqui, non dimisi, non revocabo.*" He writes to his sister:

April 1, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I do not wonder that Mr. Fleming (?) should not countenance them now; but that he should ever do it at all. He is not a man that will swim against ye stream. I am heartily glad Charles Harrison has made so wise a choice. If he is a good Husband, I am fully persuaded she will make a good Wife. I shall hope there will be a good understanding between Her and you. You are permitted to be in heaviness to humble & prove you yet more. Then you shall come forth as Gold. If you love me, you will both write and speak freely to

My Dear Sister
Your affectionate Brother
J. WESLEY

The great Methodist naturally brings to our minds the great Quaker, the founder of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I cannot cordially recommend William Penn as a setter of copies for school-boys. Penn was a distinguished personage, deserving of honor, but his chirography is as bad as that of Richard Monckton Milnes. I have toiled over his letter with patient diligence, and this is the best that I can do with it. Please to append, as in mercantile accounts, the letters "E. & O. E.":

MY RESPECTED SIR,—I receiv'd a very civil lettr from thee by Col. Rchd Hill, in favour of his concerns in this Province. So worthy a Solicitor, So ingeneous a gentleman & my own inclinations

to be just to all but kind to straingers, could hardly want my endeavours to do him all the friendly acts in my power; I wish ye ill condition he found this matter . . . in had not disabled me from persueing his right and my own desires, but wt could well be done, *rebus sic standibus*, I hope he will say was done, & that which remains is that as this business gave occasion for an unexpected corrispondence, it may be improv'd with less tragedy & better success of venture to claime a further share of thy friendship, upon ye score of an old intimacy with a nephew of thyne Sr. John Chitchley, & to assure you yt on all occasions I shall be glad to show my selfe

Thy very true Frd—
WM PENN

CHESTER, 15—12 m *Jan.* 82.

I despair of finding out what the date means, but perhaps it is not worth while to try. The letter was written to Sir Henry Chichley.

Any one may see, on looking at the portrait of Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges in the "Maclise Portrait Gallery," that the old bibliographer, occasional poet and novelist, was a peculiar personage—an eccentric genealogist, antiquary, and *littérateur*. The picture represents him to the casual observer as a strangely dressed gentleman of African descent. Brydges enjoys the honor of frequent quotation, but, as in almost every instance of industrious, laborious

oddity, his books are commonly to be found reposing among the dust-covered inhabitants of the back shelves, containing a mine of information, but too voluminous and ill-arranged to be useful to any but the curious seekers after knowledge. His letter is sufficiently characteristic:

GENEVA, *Friday morning,*
Private. 3 *May,* 31

MR. VALPY,

DEAR SIR,—I here send 2 sheets with contents for heads of chaptrs 1 & 2—rejecting what has been before sent. These will shew you the nature of my work—but the *truth* is to come! I have sworn to myself to be frank and to use no *varnish* or *vanity*. I have (out of the Bridgewater Library) a copy of George Withers *Halleluiah*, of which only one other copy is known—far the best of all Withers' works. I want it reprinted; but will never again print anything here. I am afraid you will not be inclined to take the hazard on yourself. It is a little 12mo vol. Heber has the only other copy. A small impression wd pay expenses: it has great intrinsic merit: and is applicable to life, and the morals of all ages.

I wd take the trouble to transcribe it and send you the copy—& perhaps if you decline, Pickering will take it. As you are the classical printer, permit me to mention to you that I think the following may give some light to the dispute noticed I think by Bishop Blomfield, whether Stanley in his *Aeschylus*, borrowed from Casaubon? Mené Casaubon (Isaac's son) was Rector of ——— [il-

legible] near Canterbury. Stanley's mother was daughter of Sr Wm Hammond of St. Albans Court —a parish about 5 miles off. Cd not Stanley thus thro' Mené C. have access to his father Isaac's Mss.? There are descendants of Mené Casaubon at Canterbury—viz. Mr. Wm Chandler, a surgeon, and his cousin the Revd. Philip L——, Rector or Vicar of a parish on the Weald, near Maidstone (I think Marden), a magistrate of W. Kent. I have heard they have Mss. of Casaubon. I am anxious to establish a weekly or fortnightly Review of only 3 or 4 sheets; each no to contain only one article—which wd make a whole in itself. I am disappointed at the last No of Q. R. tho' the review of Tennyson is witty enough.

Yrs,

S. E. B.

Whether Angelica Kauffman was a great painter or not, she was popular in her day, and was the first woman to achieve success in portraiture or in historical subjects. "Miss Angel," as her great master, Sir Joshua Reynolds, loved to call her, must have been an attractive person. It was supposed that she would become Lady Reynolds, but that was not to be; and Fuseli and Dance both paid court to her. She formed an unfortunate alliance, from which she was released by divorce; and at thirty she married one Antonio Zucchi, with whom she went to Italy, not to return to England. She writes to some unnamed patron—the spelling preserved:

ROM. *Nov. the* 8. 1788.

SIR,—I take the liberty to trouble you with a few lines to acquaint you that I am now giving the last touches to your two Pictures, *the two gentlemen* of Verona, and the other of *Troilus* and *Cresida*—before this reaches your hands they will be both finished—I endeavoured to do the utmost in my power to render them not unworthy of your collection. I find in one of your letters—that in answer to the objection I made respecting to the other two subjects thee pointed out for me—you was so kind as to say that, when the two I had fixed upon where finished you would find out some others instead of them—in consequence of which I shall be in attention of your determination respecting that point, and allso in regard to the forwarding the same pictures, as very likely you have your corrispondent in Leghorn to whose care perhaps you would wish to have them recommended —in case you should like in the mean time to get the frames done for the sayd pictures. . . . Mr. Zucchi's best compts wait on you and pray remember us both to ———. I have the honour to be with great respect, sir,

Your most obliged
humble servt
ANGELICA KAUFFMAN.

Hiram Powers, who made himself famous by his "Greek Slave," and who was once our leading American sculptor, displays the irritability of genius in his letter to R. H. Wilde, the statesman and writer, whose only remembered verses

are those which begin "My life is like a summer rose." It seems that there was a controversy between Powers and Martin Van Buren, and we do not presume to pass judgment, because we have not the Van Buren side of the story. This is what Powers writes, from Florence, on October 14, 1841:

. . . Eve is still in clay — but almost ready for a change to plaister. Mr. Thorwaldsen has lately favored me with a visit, and his remarks were of the most satisfactory description. He did not hesitate to touch the clay wherever he thought a change necessary, and you will be pleased to learn that the head, trunk and legs of the figure from top to base, met with his approbation. . . . Mr. Van Buren has played me a trick somewhat in keeping with his political character. He denies any knowledge of having ordered his bust of me! and that too after I had sent it in marble to Messrs. Goodhue &c—subject to his order. Luckily Mr. Clevenger has given me his evidence in writing that he had not forgotten the order eighteen months after he had requested me to make the bust. He (Mr. V. B.) sat to Mr. Clevenger for another bust and during the time so occupied often alluded to the bust I had modeled and to his having ordered it in marble—his sons also spoke of it in a way to prove that they also knew of the whole matter, and yet Mr. John Van Buren wrote the letter to me denying any knowledge of the transaction. I have directed Messrs. Goodhue & Co. to have the bust sold at

auction, after publishing a full account of the affair in the papers—what they have done—as yet—I know not—on my stating to Mr. Clevenger that Mr. Van Buren denied any knowledge of the order, he instantly proposed to take his bust of Mr. Van Buren out doors and *throw stones at it* —so indignant was he at such meanness on the part of an ex-President of the United States. If the bust has not been sold, or Mr. Van Buren comes to his recollection, I intend to *modify* it in such a manner as shall make his heirs willing to give more than double the amount charged for it.

Without attempting to decide the issue between Powers and the ex-President, I am of the opinion that the artist betrayed a reprehensible spirit. He shows a pettiness of nature by the threat of making his subject ridiculous if his demands should not be complied with. This might justly be called a sculptural "hold-up." Conceding that he was treated shabbily—as to which point we have no testimony but his own—he was not justified in "modifying" the bust to the disadvantage of Mr. Van Buren. Undoubtedly Powers was fettered by his lowly origin and humble beginnings.

It is hard to believe that nearly half a century has passed since Thomas Bailey Aldrich's first book appeared, in the brown cloth binding of the period—a slender volume of one hundred and forty-four pages. One does not associate

him with age, for there is a youthful quality about his prose and his poetry; and while his work is always excellent, the delicious tales of boyhood at Portsmouth seem to me to be the most fascinating. I see by a recent bibliography, prepared by that discriminating and industrious expert, Ernest North, that *The Story of a Bad Boy* appears in these various guises—in Dutch, French, German, and Danish:

"En slem Dreunge Historie af Thomas Bailey Aldrich."
"Un Écolier Américain."
"Die Geschichte eines bösen Buben und drei andere schöne von Thomas Bailey Aldrich."
"En Slem Drengs Historie af Thomas Bailey Aldrich."

The Danish illustrations must be exceedingly amusing.

Aldrich writes to Osgood, the publisher:

PONKAPOG, MASS.
Aug 13, 1880

MY DEAR OSGOOD,—Miss Sprague's address is Charlemont, Mass. You will see by this that I am responding for Bugbee, who on leaving us for a trip down east, requested me to open any of his letters that had an expression on their faces of desiring an immediate answer. I thought yours was an invitation to a farewell dinner at the Somerset Club, and I intended to come in Bugbee's place.

Ever yours,
T. B. ALDRICH—

Mr. Aldrich seems inclined to enjoy the repose he has earned, for he has given us no book since 1896. Perhaps it is only a pleasure deferred.

I have often wondered that literary men are so willing to confide to the world their methods of work. One would suppose that they would keep such things to themselves; but it is otherwise, and almost all of the brotherhood appear to gush confidences in that regard. Edmund Gosse has done some admirable things, and, although he still lives, I may perhaps be pardoned for giving his own description of his methods:

LONDON, *July* 20, 1884.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your questions—

1. My work being multiform and very pressing, I have no choice between the day and night. I must use both. The central hours of the day being given up to my official business for the government, which consists of translations from the various European languages, only the morning and evening remain for literary work. My books have mainly been written between 8 and 11 P.M. & corrected for the press between 9 and 10 A.M. I find the afternoon almost a useless time, the physical clock-work of the 24 hours seems to run down about 4 P.M.

2. I make no written skeleton or first draft. My first draft is what goes to the printers & commonly with very few alterations. I round off my

sentences in my head before committing them to paper.

3. I use no stimulants at work. I take wine twice a day, but after dinner I neither eat nor drink. I have found this essential to my health and power of work. The only exception I make is, that as I am closing for the night,—a little before 11 P. M. —I take several cups of very strong tea, which I have proved by experience to be by far the best sedative for my nerves. If I go to bed immediately after this strong tea, at the close of a hard day's work, I generally sleep soundly as soon as my head is on the pillow. Coffee keeps me awake and so does alcohol. I have tried doing without wine, but have always returned to it with benefit. I have entirely given up tobacco, which never suited me.

4. I can work anywhere, if I am not distracted. I have no difficulty in writing in unfamiliar places, —the waiting room of a railway station or a rock on the sea-shore suits me as well (except for the absence of books of reference) as the desk in my study.

5. I cannot do literary or any other brain-work for more than 3 hours on a stretch. I believe that a man who will work 3 hours of every working day will ultimately appear to have achieved a stupendous result in bulk, if this is an advantage. But, then, he must be rapid while he is at work, & must not fritter away his resources on starts in vain directions.

6. I am utterly unable to write to order, that is to say on every occasion.—I can generally write, but there are occasions when for weeks I am con-

scious of an invincible disinclination, and this I never force. Consequently I am by temperament unfitted for journalism, in which I have happily never been obliged to take any part.

In the above notes I have been speaking entirely of prose composition. Verse gets itself written at odd times without rule or precedent and of course cannot be submitted to rule. But my experience is that the habit of regular application is beneficial to the production of prose. . . .

Yours faithfully,

EDMUND GOSSE.

This is rather funny, because the writer takes himself seriously; and so many men of brains work continuously so many more hours than three in each day! Gosse's labors are mere dalliance compared with the work of the statesman, or even of the lawyer, who works hard every day for three times three hours. But literary men are entitled to our indulgence, and they must not be judged by ordinary standards.

XVI

THE war of the American Revolution was not a great war from a military point of view. The numbers engaged were small, the strategic feats were insignificant, and the campaigns were of trifling magnitude. Only the results entitle it to admiration. We are accustomed to revere the generals who led the Continental forces in their struggle during those eventful seven years, and it is not to the disparagement of our commanders that the armies which they led were meagre and inconsiderable. The difficulties they encountered were as great in proportion to their power of overcoming them as if these plucky soldiers had been the leaders of the hundreds of thousands who contended on the battle-fields of the war of the Rebellion. Washington's work at Trenton and Princeton has won the praises of even English military critics, and it turned the tide setting so strongly against the cause of independence. The campaigns of Napoleon, Von Moltke, and Grant were more remarkable in the

matter of the number of combatants, but not more wonderful in their conception, their execution, or their consequences.

Naturally, the first letter of a general of the Revolution must be one of George Washington. Among a number addressed to General James Mitchell Varnum, this one is perhaps as good an example of his military style as we may select. It is dated at Morristown, March 3, 1777:

I have the pleasure of congratulating you upon your appointment to the rank of Brigadier General in the Continental Army. Your commission shall be forwarded to you as soon as it comes to my hands. It will bear date from 21st last month. I beg you will make use of your utmost exertions to raise and equip the two Battalions allotted to your State, which by a letter from Gov. Cook, I hope will be soon done. I have recommended innoculation to all Recruits in the new Army, who have not had the small-pox, and I desire that as fast as yours are inlisted, they may be sent to some convenient place and there take the infection. By these means, no time will be lost, for the men will go thro' the disorder, while their arms and cloaths are preparing. You will from time to time make me returns of the number of men enlisted, and in what forwardness they are in for service.—

Another letter of Washington to General Varnum, bearing three lines of endorsement by Robert H. Harrison, later to be appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United

States, may be worthy of reproduction, for it shows the general's careful supervision of the details of his campaigns:

HEAD QRS AT FREDERICK WOMPOL'S
9 *Oct.*, 1777.

SIR,—I received your letter early this morning by the return of the Express.

Since the order given for the march of Colo. Green's and Angel's Regiments, some circumstances have cast up, which from appearances, make so large a number of Continental Troops at Red Bank unnecessary. I therefore desire that you will on receipt of this send the express to Colo. Angel, to return immediately with his regiment, and to join this Army, as soon as he can. I am much surprised to find the Troops were on the road to Coriel's Ferry, and only ten miles from it, after I had pointed out the proper Rout in the most plain and direct terms. You will write Colo Greene on the subject, and order him to pursue the way mentioned in his Instructions. He will lose no time in getting to Red Bank with his regiment. My Intention was, that you and Gen'l Huntingdon should join me this morning with the remainder of the troops, and so I thought I expressed myself. You are to do it.

I am, sir,
Yr. Most obed't ser't
G. WASHINGTON

(Postscript)

If the weather should prove unfit for Troops to march, you will remain where you are till it is suitable. By command,

ROBT. H. HARRISON

The name of Benedict Arnold has been held up to execration ever since his treason, but he was a brave man and a good soldier, who yielded to a feeling of resentment at what he believed, perhaps excusably, to be unjust treatment. He was also convinced that the leaders of his countrymen were, after all, a selfish lot, intent on personal profit and aggrandizement. Considering what John Adams wrote of one of the Continental Congresses, it may be that Arnold was not far wrong. His betrayal of his trust was, of course, unpardonable, but it was not wholly without provocation. Brave as he was, he was a jealous, difficult person at the best, and his treatment of every one who stood in the way of his advancement shows how impossible it was to deal reasonably with him. Our respect for Washington is increased by our knowledge of the kindness and patience with which he bore the pettishness and discontent of his gallant but insubordinate brigadier —a patience exhausted only when the misguided, hot-tempered, wrong-minded Arnold committed the gravest offence of which a soldier may be guilty, and sacrificed honor and all of which a good man may be proud in a blind surrender to angry impulse.

Arnold writes to the Governor of Rhode Island:

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

PHILADELPHIA, *March* 20, 1780.

SIR,—The President & Council of the State of Pennsylvania having published & officially transmitted to the different States, sundry Resolutions of theirs dated Philadelphia, Feby 3d 1779, containing heavy charges tending to prejudice the minds of my Fellow Citizens against me, previous to a Trial, which with much difficulty I have at last obtained. The justice due to my own character (and to the Public who have been so greatly deceived) will, I trust, cause the liberty I have taken in transmitting to your Excellency the Proceedings of the Court Martial on my Trial; which I must request you will do me the Favor to lay before the Council & General Assembly, as I would wish to take off from the minds of those Gentlemen every unfavorable Impression which the unprecedented Publication of the President & Council of Pennsylvania *may* have made, & to convince them that my Character has been most cruelly & unjustly aspersed.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect—
Your Excellency's most obedient and
very humble servant
B. ARNOLD

His Excellency
GOVERNOR GREENE.

There can be no doubt as to the ability of Aaron Burr, as a lawyer, a soldier, and a politician. Whatever may be the judgment of men upon his integrity or his morality, we must admit the brilliancy of his intellect. He lacked the principles of an honest man, the character which often counts for more than mere brains.

He barely missed the highest prizes of public life. I do not believe that he was a traitor to his country in thought or deed, but he frightened Jefferson and shocked the conservative element of the community, which feared Jefferson almost as much as it dreaded Burr. He had a dream of empire in the Southwest, which faded away because it was absurd and impossible; but there is no proof that he ever meant to destroy the union of the States.

Singularly enough, one of my Burr letters is associated with an autograph of Thomas Conway, a member of the cabal which secretly sought to undermine the authority of Washington. He was called "Count de Conway"; an Irish adventurer, he busied himself in intrigues. As we look back upon that time, we can see how petty and ineffective were the wire-pullers who aimed at the dethronement of the general-in-chief, and who cared little for the cause of independence; but they were dangerous, and it required courage, firmness, and personal power to defeat them. Luckily for our country, Conway went away to join the French, who made him Count, Field-Marshal, and Governor of the French East Indies. As the children say, it was a good riddance to bad rubbish. He is well associated with Aaron Burr, and this is the record:

SIR,—The Papers and Cloathing of the Comps which have lately joined Mahone's Regimt. are at Bethlem. The Papers are now wanted and several of the officers cannot appear decent till they receive other cloathes for these reasons I would beg your indulgence for Leave of absence for two Subalterns, six days—their Presence is not particularly necessary with their Companies. I am, sir, with the greatest esteem, your very humble servant—

A. BURR.

Sunday 11 *o'clock—*
[*Nov.* 1777]
HONBLE GEN. CONWAY.

Col. Burr is master to send such officers as he thinks requisite in order to procure the papers wanted and the cloths for the use of his regiment.

T. CONWAY—

Another member of the combination against Washington—indeed, the one who was put forward as the leader, although he was but the merest figure-head—was Horatio Gates, the alleged hero of Saratoga, who profited by the foresight and energy of Philip Schuyler and the bravery of Benedict Arnold and Daniel Morgan. He won, or had the credit of winning, the victory over Burgoyne, a result accomplished by a variety of circumstances for which Gates was in no way responsible; and for a brief time it was a question whether his temporary glory would enable him to supplant his chief. Gates

was weak rather than vicious, and there is no doubt that he meant to be patriotic and honorable; he lacked real military intelligence and true capacity for leadership; and his vanity led him to permit himself to be used as a tool. His letter has an honest ring about it:

WHITE PLAINS, *2d July, 1778.*

DEAR SIR,—Inclosed I send you a copy of a letter just received from General Washington. I most heartily wish you joy of the good news, and impatiently expect the Particulars of the Action, which his Excellency has promised to send me. In consequence of my earnest wish, and the General's Recommendation, I must beg you to give your whole attention to the compleating of, first, the Out Works at West Point, and then the Body of the Place. Col. Kusciuskeo, cannot be too vigilant in this important Service.

I am, Dear General, your affectionate
Humble Servant
HORATIO GATES.

P.S. I desire the Favour of you, to transmit His Excellency Govr. Clinton, a copy of Genl. Washington's Letter by Express.

HONBLE B. GEN. GLOVER,
WEST POINT.

The army of the Revolution owed a memorable debt to Friedrich Wilhelm August Heinrich Ferdinand, Baron von Steuben, formerly grand-marshal to the court of the Prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, and, through Silas Deane,

persuaded to lend his aid to the cause of America, turning the desolate camp of Valley Forge into "a training-school of arms, teaching, what these troops had never known before, promptness and precision in the manual of arms, in mass and ordered movement, in the use of the bayonet, the drill, and mastery of the charge and of the open field."[1] He wrote to an old comrade in Prussia: "You say to your soldier, 'Do this,' and he doeth it; I am obliged to say to mine, 'This is the reason why you ought to do that,' and then he does it." Yet he liked us well enough to serve faithfully during the war and to end his life here in 1794. He writes:

SIR,—I enclose your excellency an abstract of the state of the forces of this State drawn from the Returns—by this you will observe that supposing no deficiency arises in the 3000 men voted & that the number now in the field does not diminish 1844 men will still be wanting of the Quota determined by Congress. With respect

I am
Your Excellency's
Jany 30. 1781. Most obed. Servt—
STEUBEN
GOV. JEFFERSON— Maj. Gen.

One of the minor generals who fought under Gates at Saratoga was John Glover, and he

[1] *Washington*, Woodrow Wilson, p. 200.

was a gallant fellow, who vindicated the title of the Marblehead Yankees to fame as ferocious fighters. Glover's name has long ago faded from memory, and only the collectors of "Revolutionary Generals" give him the tribute of attention or respect; but there is a natural vigor about this letter to his wife which endears him to me:

ON THE HIGHTS 3 MILES ABOVE STILWATER,
Sept. 26 1777.

MY DEAR, — I wrote you the 21 since which nothing material has happened, saveing last night I went down with a party of men & supprizd the Enemys Piquet took one Prisoner killed seven took seven knapsacks & guns—one sword 7 Blankets—by 3 Deserters from the enemy we are informd they had killed & wounded in the battale of ye 19th 746, we had only 100 killed 202 wounded part of which are since Dead. Thank God, I am well, hope this will find you & children so to whom give my Love & best affections, & regards to all friends, & believe me to be most Sincerely yours, &c.

JOHN GLOVER—

To MRS. HANNAH GLOVER,
Marblehead.

Another general of little notoriety, but who was a brave officer and distinguished in his time, was Mordecai Gist, of Maryland. His letter shows that in those days of patriotic fervor there were hostilities among our revered ancestors which seriously threatened to disrupt

the temporary union of Americans against the invading English. It is a matter of wonder that all these minor quarrels and feuds were buried at last, and that personal enmities disappeared so completely that the record of them is growing faint and almost indecipherable. Gist's letter gives us a little insight into some of the lesser troubles of the period:

BALTIMORE, *29th April*, 1777.

SIR, — By a letter from Colonel Ramsay I find that the evil genius of some individuals has prompted them to vent their spleen and Ill nature in a most unmanly way by propagating a report of my having wrote to Congress and General Washington refusing for particular purposes to march to Camp which the General considered as a resignation, the particulars I understand you are made acquainted with. I consider the author of this absurdity more entitled to my pity than resentment, and had I not been assured of its gaining a degree of Credit with some of the members of your House, I should not have troubled you on this occasion, as I am truly conscious that no action or conduct of mine can give a sanction to such report, with the least plausibility of truth, and can assure you I never in my life had the honour to address Congress or General Washington by Letter on any subject whatever, except a few lines to Mr. Hancock (from Annapolis) respecting the proceedings of the Assembly of this State.

Your knowledge of me for a considerable term of years has not only made you acquainted with

New Jersey, they still show you the house which Mrs. White kept as a tavern in 1776, and where the surly, discontented Charles Lee was captured by the British in a most ignominious fashion. Lee was a brave man and an officer of intelligence, but he was a passionate, intemperate person, more ambitious than patriotic, and, as Mellick, the gentle historian of Somerset, says, with more accuracy than elegance, he was "constitutionally a sorehead." He was disappointed when Washington was preferred to him as commander-in-chief; but his love of adventure led him to accept a commission as major-general, and he served, with many complaints and much grumbling, until at Monmouth he came to his fall. He is not an agreeable person. His letter gives a slight indication of his character:

PEEKSKILL, *December* 2, 1776.

DEAR GENERAL,—If you have reason to think that any considerable corps of the Militia will join you in a few days, you may venture to keep the Post you at present occupy, but if there is no prospect of such a junxion, I would by no means have you remain, as you might with your few numbers, in a position which demands a considerable Force, be exposed to insult or surprize,—in this case you should retire to the hill where two Companies of Fellows's Bridage [*sic*] are posted to cover the Stores, it is strong by Nature and

requires little labour to be render'd very respectable. I wish to God the Militia may join you soon so as to enable you to keep your present Post—it is in my opinion very important—it protects a fine Country of forage much wanted by the Enemy—it covers the frontiers of Connecticut and keeps the large Bodies of Tories in order, who without some such check, wou'd probably take an active part. I hope you have detach'd the four hundred men to Heath or his heart will break. He is confident that all the movements of the Enemy in every part of the Continent are only feints—that they only mean to weaken him and that when he is taken all is taken, all is lost—the fact is so many Men of the Party I march'd off from White Plains are so feet gall'd that without taking two Regiments from Heath I cou'd not march a force sufficient to the Jerseys, and perhaps the fate of America depends on the competency of my force; this number I have order'd from you is to replace the two Regiments. Adieu Dr General, let me hear from you on every occasion

Yours,

To CHARLES LEE—
MAJOR GENERAL SPENCER.

A more enthusiastic rebel was William Maxwell, with an Irishman's fondness for fight, who was a soldier from his twenty-third year until the close of the Revolution. He was highly esteemed by Washington, and he commanded the New Jersey brigade at Brandywine and Germantown. His letter is rather social

than military, but altogether Irish, and one cannot help having an affection for Maxwell as well as a respect for his ability as an officer:

ELIZTH TOWN, *22d Augt* 1779—

DEAR PORTEOUS,—I am favoured with yours of the 20th . . . This unnatural dispute has broken in on all my latter schemes of life and oeconomy, I had just seated myself down at the side of the Mill and only wanted some agreeable Female (which I imagined was three parts engaged) to make me happy the remainder of my days. That part of my life now appears to have been a dream, but I intend yet, though at so late an hour, to pursue the same schemes when the time will admit. I find you are in the Bachelor way still, if you will take a Friend's advice get out of it as soon as you can. There is several fine young Ladys in this Town besides a great many in the State: when the present Dispute is over, if you will come to this State with desires of Matrimony you may be shure of my interest, and I will with pleasure take a leap in concert.

I am, Dear Porteous, your most
obedt Humble Sert—
WM MAXWELL—

MR. JOHN PORTEOUS.

The quartermaster-general of the army, Stephen Moylan, is so obscure that he barely crawls into the most comprehensive of cyclopædias, although he receives due credit in *Harper's Encyclopaedia of United States History.* He rendered efficient service and deserves re-

membrance as much as if he had led a theatrical charge at Saratoga. I like to read over his letter, because it conveys to my mind a sense of some of the difficulties of the time, the matters which are passed by in histories, the every-day troubles which never become the subject of formal record. Moylan says:

MR. HUGHES,—I believe every step that we can think, for collecting boards are now putting in execution; there are other things which it is time we should be providing & which the General calls upon us to exert ourselves in, for the erecting of Barracks, Joice, Brick, Lime, & Stone, Shingles, in short everything necessary to build Barracks that will contain at least 20,000 men. The General says that the commanding officers, in conjunction with the Engineers, will fix upon the proper spots for making the collection of materials which will be nearest the places where they intend the Barracks shall be erected. When you have the Sulky put in order, send it to me as I intend going up to see where these spots will be—Do you in the mean time exert that active spirit with which you are blest, and pick up all the shingles in the town which you will please to send to Kingsbridge. Do you know where Bricks are to be had, or Lime. Set about these things with your usual attention & I doubt not we shall be able to comply with the General's commands. Not a moment is to be lost, as the enemy can take the town from us whenever they please. I am truly yours— STEPHEN MOYLAN,

Sept. 9, 1776. QM. GENL

Meditations of an Autograph Collector

We are not quite certain that we know much about "Old Put." We are assured that he was present at Bunker Hill; we are not much encouraged to believe in his encounter with the wolf or in his breakneck ride at Greenwich; and among all the confusion of historians we are at a loss to know anything about his life prior to the Revolution. At one time it was generally understood that he was born in 1718, and that he served in the French War; and the picture of Putnam leaving his plough to fly to Cambridge as a volunteer is familiar to us. Recent investigations have so disturbed my mind with regard to Putnam that I am not prepared to admit anything about him except that he was a major-general in the Continental army—a poor one at that—and that he wrote execrable English. Iconoclasts agree, however, that he was in the immediate vicinity when "Bunker Hill" was fought, and therefore he has a passport to fame. This document of his certainly preserves the record of his illiteracy:

Received of Leut Samll Hunt three Dollers which shall intitle him to a Shire or Proportion of Land agrieable to his Rank or otherwise in the Company of Millatary adventurers in a grant of Land attained from the crown by Major General P. Lyman bounded west by the River Missiseppi

North by the River Yason betwein the Latitude Thirty two & thirty four. Dated at

CHARLESTOWN, *5th December*, 1772—

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

It is not often that one may come into possession of a real written offer of marriage by a hero; and the gallant Alexander Scammell, the handsome, dashing soldier, who met his fate at Yorktown, has given us a genuine love-letter. I wish that I could pause to dwell upon his personal history, but I cannot. He was brave and wise, an excellent adjutant-general, and I regret that "dear Naby" seems never to have responded favorably to his suit. He writes to her in these ardent phrases:

CAMP MIDDLEBROOK, *Decr. 26th*, 78

DEAR NABY,—I have wrote you so many letters without having the pleasure of receiving a single answer, that I am in much at a loss how to address you in that way which would be most agreable to you. I wrote you in my last that I entertained hopes of comming to Mistic this winter— The duty of my office is so great & of such a Nature that I am apprehensive, indeed am well assured that His Excellency will not grant me the Indulgence unless you would generously surmount the supposed difficulties which you think lay in your way and condescend to give me your Hand as soon as I arrived. In that case the Genl is possessed of so much Delicacy & Generosity that I am sure he would give me Leave of

absence. I hear you are still disengaged, & that I have ground to hope. If that is the case, my dearest Naby, you have sufficiently tryed me to be convinced in your own Breast that I love, that I esteem, that I entertain a tender, a most fixed affection for you. We both my dear girl are advancing in years, and grow older every day. The many happy couple we Daily see, the assertions of those already married, our own feelings, nay our duty to society convince us the married state is the most happy, the most eligible, & that we cannot be completely contented till we arrive at that state. The longer we remain single, the greater difficulties will arise in our minds. The War which seemed the principal objection in your mind the last happy moments I was with you, is nearly closed. I hope next summer, perhaps this winter, will put a period to it. If the most tender love, & tryed affection can make you happy, I'm sure no person can contribute more to it than I can.

Our long acquaintance & intimate connection, renders all reserve or scruples unnecessary and superfluous. We are well acquainted with each other's minds & dispositions. You are the only object of all I hold dear upon earth. You have it in your power to make me the happiest, most grateful Husband in the world, whose whole study would be your Happiness & Contentement. You are possest of those tender delicate sensations which will induce you not to treat with cruelty or neglect a person so totally absorbed & devoted to you. I know you have a generous soul. I conjure you by all the tender ties of Friendship, Love & the

tender moments we have spent together, to write me an answer to this. I must urge and insist upon it. Generously condescend to promise me you will make me happy in the Nuptial Bonds. By which means I shall be able to obtain Liberty to fly to your arms and convince you that you have bestowed your affections & hand upon a person whose lively sense of gratitude will ever render him studiously anxious to do everything in his power to deserve so rich a blessing. My dearest, pardon me if in this letter I have wrote any offensive expressions. Consider me as a man pleading for earthly happiness, & in that light I hope you'll excuse my errors in expression — From my long connection with you, & the vast number of letters I have wrote you, I think in justice you ought to send me an answer, & that I have a right to request one. I must again intreat you to write the first opportunity to Your

MISS NABY BISHOP— ALEX. SCAMMELL

There is a story concerning John Stark and the battle of Bennington, in which the hero of that conflict is reported to have made some remark about "Molly Stark" being a widow in a certain contingency; but as the wife of General Stark was not named Molly, we may dismiss it without further consideration. The gallant old soldier lived to the age of ninety-three years, and gained immortality by his heroic fight at Bennington. There is no doubt that he contributed materially to the discom-

fiture of Burgoyne. This letter was written by him only a few days before the famous battle:

MANCHESTER, *August* 10, 1777.

SIR,—Your favour of 8 of the clock last evening came to hand precisely at 11 this morning. Agreeable to Genl Schuyler's request, joined by yours, I immediately issued orders for my Brigade to repair to Headqrs in order to march to Bennington. Be pleased Sir to assure Genl. Schuyler that I will do everything in my power to promote the Publick good. And I flatter myself that he has more honor than to desire I should do anything that may hereafter or at present prove inconsistent with mine.

I am sir, your most obedt humble servant

JOHN STARK.

To GENL LINCOLN.

I shall resist the temptation to add more to the record of Revolutionary generals. They are numerous, and perhaps a little too prolix.

would expect to see mustered together as the representatives of thirteen disjointed and unassimilated colonies who regarded one another with distrust, although drawn together by the common impulse of resistance to injustice and oppression. There were all grades of men among them, ranging from the philosophic Franklin to Clark, the New Jersey sheriff, and from the spirited and impetuous Adams to young Lynch, whose only title to a seat in Congress was derived from its previous occupancy by his father.

Those experts who turn up the nose of scorn at anything except an A. L. S. of 1776 may, perhaps, scoff at my examples, but I derive much comfort from them, although it is sad to behold that vacant space which should be filled by a Button Gwinnett. I am patiently waiting for Danforth to find some Gwinnetts in hiding somewhere in Georgia. Perhaps if I had known Mr. James W. Turner I might have supplied the deficiency, for Draper tells us that he furnished, on demand, the autographs of "Gwinnett, Hall, and other rare Signers."

The list always begins with Josiah Bartlett, of New Hampshire, the patriot physician, who was the first man to give his vote for the Declaration and the second to sign it; such, at least, is the tradition, but I do not know upon

what it is based. To the Honorable John Langdon, who afterwards enjoyed the distinction of being the first presiding officer of the Senate of the United States, Bartlett writes, with much good sense but defective spelling:

PHILADELPHIA, *October 27* 1778.

DEAR SIR,—By the several letters which have been sent to Congress by the Brittish Commissn they seem to be possessed of an Idea that Congress has exceeded their powers in forming an alliance with France and in rejecting the Commissrs offers of Reconcilliation and that in both those influences we had acted contrary to the sense of our Constituents. Whether they are really Deceived by the Tory accounts that they receive from the several States or whether they mean to Deceive others by publishing such falsehoods, I am uncertain. But this I am certain of, that so long as Brittain has the smallest hope remaining of our submmitting to her Domination again, she will never recognize our independance and consequently the war must continue. It is therefore our Interest to convince Brittain & every body else that the French alliance and the Rejection of the offers of the Commissrs are approved of universally by these States, and that that power of making Peace & War and contracting alliances is vested solely in the Congress. . . . As my power of Representing the State will expire next Saturday, I expect to set out for home the Beginning of next week: hope proper care will be taken to have the State represented here.

Your friend & servt.

JOSIAH BARTLETT—

to request that you will appoint a suitable officer under your command with such aid as you shall judge necessary to proceed to Penobscot & give him Instructions in every respect strictly to carry into effect the views of the General Court manifested in the inclosed Resolve; after this business is effected you will please to transmit to me the Results of your doings. . . .

I am, with Respect, Sir,
Your most obed. servt
JOHN HANCOCK.

BRIG. GENL. MCCOBB.

I must not spend much time over the more obscure Signers, and I come to Elbridge Gerry, later Vice-President, who gave to our political vocabulary the famous word "gerrymander." He had ability and independence of character, but as he was not a devoted admirer of Hamilton and of Hamilton's methods, he has been disparaged by the Hamiltonian historians. A patriotic citizen and an intelligent, faithful public servant, he always possessed the confidence of his fellows, and the fact that John Adams made him one of the envoys to France in 1797 shows the regard which even a political opponent had for him. He writes to Samuel Bradley in 1813:

I have received from Doctor Manney, in London, a package in regard to which he states, that "the large parcel addressed to you contains books intended for sale by auction for improvements in

Fryburg. I request you to retain them till Mr. Samuel Bradley & you communicate." I have also a magazine which he says his printer addresses for your acceptance. Enclosed is likewise a prospectus, transmitted to you agreeably to his request. Please to inform me by a line where to deposit the package and magazine; &, if I should be absent, Mrs. Gerry will order them to the place, if near this, you may propose for receiving them.

Here is also a letter to Vans Murray (who was envoy to the Netherlands in 1797), written in April, 1798, from his post of duty in France:

. . . I flatter myself that you know me too well to suppose that an "official reception" a mere civility, could have the weight of a feather in forming in my mind so important a decision: if I had an ambition of this kind, it has been & is now in my power to gratify it; but I would not give a sol to have my name affixed to every treaty of the U. States made or to be made during my life; indeed, all personal considerations are against my remaining here: the state of my family demands my immediate return to it; emolument is out of the question, each of the envoys having spent his salary & one of them nearly twice the amount, but if the emolument was £20,000 a year it would be no temptation to me to be seperated from my family. . . .

Those of us who are familiar with the fac similes of the Declaration are mindful of the tremulous signature of Stephen Hopkins, of

Rhode Island, who was in his seventieth year when he wrote the faltering characters, and who was afflicted with partial paralysis. He had enjoyed the honor of being a chief-justice for some time, although he was not a lawyer, but a farmer, land-surveyor, and merchant, and he was ten times chosen governor of the little colony. It was during one of his terms of office as chief magistrate that he wrote this letter, which is dated at Providence on August 2, 1755:

This moment I recd. a letter from Govr. Delancey enclosing the Copy of one from Capt. Orme giving an account of the Defeat and Death of Genl. Braddock and many of his officers and men. This is an event of so much consequence to all the Colonys that I thought it my Duty to send it to you by Express not knowing you would receive it from any other quarter.

I shall immediately call our Genl. Assembly together and recomend to them in the strongest manner the doing everything within their Power toward repairing this unhappy Loss and preventing any other of the same Nature. What method will be thought most effectual by the Colonys for such a purpose I cannot yet tell, but am in hopes all will exert themselves to the utmost. I am, sorrowfully at present, etc.

Considering the fact that John Witherspoon had been in this country only eight years when he affixed his name to the Declaration, he must

Dear Sir

Bristol July 31. 1701

The Bearer Anthony Johnson
Brickmaker & Partner to Mr Thos Woodrop of this
Place, They have begun Business together and he means
to call upon you for Goods - If you please you may
charge me to his Credit for £40 and as they are
both Persons of good Repute & Credit if you give them
Credit for 6 months more I will be answerable -
then pray as the Time appointed I am Dear Sir

Yours

Jno Wilkinson

Mr Walter Grove
Merch. Philadelphia

be said to have made a distinguished mark as a patriot. He was called to the presidency of Princeton in 1768, and his memory is dear to Princetonians. The famous village, as all remember, boasts the possession of two homes of the Signers—the beautiful old "Morven," where Richard Stockton lived, and "Tusculum," the dwelling of the sturdy Scotchman who preceded James McCosh by exactly a century. There may be little historical importance in my letter of Witherspoon, but it shows, at all events, that he was not backward in the support of those whom he esteemed. One hundred pounds was a considerable sum in those days:

PRINCETON, *July* 31, 1781.

DR SIR,—The bearer, Anthony Joline is brother in law & partner to Mr. Elias Woodruff of this place. They have begun business together, and he means to call upon you for goods. If you please, you may charge me to his credit for £40 and as they are both persons of good report and credit, if you give them credit for 60 pounds more I will be answerable for their paying at the time appointed.

I am D Sir—
Yours &c
JNO. WITHERSPOON—

MR. MATHEW IRVINE
MERCHT, PHILADELPHIA.

Cæsar Rodney, of Delaware, was not one of the most famous of the Signers, and his letters

are but moderately rare; but letters written in July, 1776, by any Signer are of interest, at least to the collector, and this one gives us a glimpse of the state of affairs in Philadelphia in that eventful month:

PHILADELPHIA, *July the 17th* 1776.

SIR,—I Recd from you a few lines yesterday and am much pleased to hear my harvest is in so good way, hope that this week you will be able to secure it. I am glad the Hay Harvest has engaged your attention—that article will be verry material to us next winter. If it be possible, I will have Botsays shoos done by the time I set out for Newcastle to attend the assembly, where I expect to meet you and the rest of our members. But do assure you it is verry difficult as all most all the tradesmen of every kind have left the City. I have not now a Barber to shave me. In consequence of a bad cold caught on the last week by some means or other unknown to me, and getting verry wet on Sunday in returning from Congress, I have been ever since then confined to my room, but am now so much better as to be able to attend this morning— . . . Lord Howe's transports with the soldiery are not yet arrived. I am with love to all of you,

Yr humble servt.

THOMAS RODNEY Esq. CAESAR RODNEY—

George Wythe, the law-preceptor of Henry Clay, wrote in a singular fashion, almost "printing" his characters, each letter separate from its neighbors; all exceedingly neat, and, despite

a little stiffness of effect, remarkably pleasing. The great Virginia chancellor, like Mr. Justice Miller, of the Supreme Court, began his study of law at about thirty years of age, and attained the highest eminence; but Miller spent his "twenties" in practising medicine, while Wythe passed those years in ridding himself of a comfortable fortune. After settling up with his creditors he settled down to work, making ample atonement for his years of indiscretion, and dying, at eighty, from accidental poisoning. There are not many letters of his to be had by the amateur collector, although signed documents are passably common. My letter is not signed; the name, however, in the body of it, shows it is addressed to Everard Robinson. I give only a fragment, showing the quaint style:

> I thank thee, good sir, for thy kind letter received yesterday, and shall be obliged to thee for endeavouring to preserve my land and house from devastation until I can sell or lease them. I beg thee to present my good wishes to my friend and old acquaintance, thy father. Adieu. 31 Octob. 1801

One of the difficult Signers is Joseph Hewes, of North Carolina, and another is William Hooper, of the same State. I suppose that if I had begun my quest of their letters years ago I might have been more successful in my

efforts. I feel like exclaiming, in Eugene Field's words—his perversion of Horace: "Oh that I had lived before I was born!" My documents have, however, some association with the beginnings of our navy, and may therefore be worthy of preservation.

Hewes was a member of the Naval Committee of Congress in 1775, and, together with Stephen Hopkins, Christopher Gadsden, John Adams, and Silas Deane, signed this letter of instructions to Dudley Saltonstall, on November 27, 1775. Saltonstall was the first captain in the navy of the United States:

The Congress are now preparing two ships and two brigantines to be fitted out as soon as possible to cruise against our common enemy. They have thought of you as a proper person to take the command of one of these ships as Captain. If you enter into this service, which we take to be the service of your country, you will give us the earliest information and repair to Philadelphia as soon as your affairs will possibly admit, and bring with you as many officers and seamen as you can procure at New London, and between that place and Philadelphia. Those who may not be able to come with you, leave proper persons to encourage and conduct along after you.

If money should be necessary for the performance of this service, you may draw on Mr. Eleazer Miller, Merchant in New York, who has money in his hands for that purpose.

In a day or two after you receive this, you will receive by the Messrs. Mumfords the Conditions and encouragement offered to the seamen.

Hooper was a member of what was known as the "Marine Committee"; and that committee, which included John Hancock, Robert Morris, Richard Henry Lee, Francis Lewis, William Whipple, William Hooper, and George Walton, wrote on October 30, 1776, to Commodore Esek Hopkins, in these words:

We have received such intelligence as satisfies us that Enemies' Ships and vessels have all quitted Georgia and the Carolinas, which renders it unnecessary for you to pursue the expedition formerly directed to these States. But, as we have still reason to suppose that the *Galatea* and *Nautilus* are cruizing of the Capes of Virginia we desire you will proceed thither with all possible despatch and endeavour to fall in with these Ships and take, sink or destroy them.

If when you are on that station you should be informed that any of the Enemies' Ships of war have returned to the Carolinas, or Georgia, you are in that case to go in search of them and effectually remove them. Having finished this business, you are to return and cruize for and endeavour to intercept the Store and provisions vessels coming from Europe to the Enemies' army at New York.

We expect you will give this Committee information by every opportunity of your proceedings and what success you may meet with in the above enterprizes. We wish you success and are Sir, &c., &c.

When Dr. Draper published his book, in 1889, he knew of but one full letter of Thomas Lynch, Jr.—Emmet's famous one, unique and unapproachable; three documents signed; and twenty-two signatures. That is what I laboriously spell out of the learned doctor's confused, ill-arranged, and rambling dissertations. If Draper could have procured the assistance of a competent writer to present to the world his valuable discoveries and the result of his researches, it would have been a distinct advantage to the student. Soon after he gave his brochure to the public the doctor began to give signs of what may be termed Lynchomania, and, as I am informed, he thought that he had found many signatures, cut from books, which less enthusiastic experts regard with grave suspicion. My own Lynch signature I believe to be beyond question.

It is a full signature, written on the back of the frontispiece of a large quarto volume, entitled "*The Tragedies of Sophocles from the Greek;* by Thomas Franklin M.A. Fellow of Trinity College and Greek Professor in the University of Cambridge, Vol. I. London. Printed for R. Franklin, in Covent Garden, 1759." I myself detached the sheet from the book, as there was another but less satisfactory signature on the title-page, and I was obliged to take my

choice. The book came from the Pringles, of Charleston, and was a part of the Lynch library. It was given, with others, to Rev. J. M. Pringle about 1840, and eventually found its way to Mrs. M. T. Pringle. These facts I learned from several sources, and among them from Rev. Mr. Pringle—not the original owner, but a descendant — in a personal interview. I am entirely confident that my autograph is a genuine one.

I must fight against the temptation to dwell on the Signers; the field is too extensive. I will only quote George Walton, of Georgia (moderately rare), because of his touching reference to his son Jesse. He writes, on April 22, 1777, to Colonel John Stirk:

> . . . I wish General Success to your State, & sincerely wish I was well settled among you. However, while I am here I shall endeavor to serve your State to the uttermost. As my son, Jesse, has had his mind a little depress'd by fits, I shall be glad he can have his acct. adjusted, and if I can have any Influence with your state that he might not go into the Camp till he gets perfectly restored. . . .

Let us sincerely hope that the adjustment of Jesse's account relieved him from his fitful depression.

As Lincoln said in his first inaugural address, "I am loath to close." I should be glad to

wander further among the Americana, the Revolutionary, the Napoleonic, the Literary, the Dramatic, and the Political; but these meditations must not be unduly prolonged. "*Modus est rebus*"—"There must be an end of things"—Lord Kenyon was wont to say. No one will ever be as fond of my pets as I have been, and at no distant day they will be scattered among the bidders at the inevitable auction-sale which awaits all collections save only those consigned to perpetual burial in some library. My own association with them will be lost and forgotten. I look upon them almost as one might upon the children whom he must leave behind him. They, however, may remember, while our cherished autographs and books, in serene unconsciousness, will be forever unmindful of the fondness which has been lavished upon them. A rare book will now and then retain the record of a tender and devoted ownership, but an autograph seldom recalls the memory of a chance possessor. None the less dear to me are these relics of the leaders of life and of literature. Some one will preserve them, and perhaps may fondle them as I have done. I trust that they may come under the protecting care of a true collector, a real antiquary—no mere bargain-hunter, no "snapper up of unconsid-

ered trifles," but one endowed with the capacity to appreciate whatsoever things are worthy of the affection of the lover of letters and of history.

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